

CBW

Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news weekly Issue 298 4 December 1997

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BLAST FROM THE PAST

*Norris says Tories
took wrong route*

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EDITORIAL

Belt proposals must be stopped

IT IS NOW CLEAR that, for the last three years, the coach and bus industry has been driving in the fast lane of seatbelt retrofitment without the benefit of a speed limiter. And nobody who was responsible for framing the now controversial regulations appears to have given thought to the consequences.



When the word 'retrofit' was first voiced, the industry was unanimous in its condemnation. It was a policy fraught with problems and the Europeans couldn't believe it. Nevertheless, the need for seatbelts on coaches used for school transport became enshrined in legislation.

However, time had already moved on and commercial necessity had forced operators down the seatbelt route. It was uncharted territory and common sense dictated the application of basic safety rules while keeping an eye on the rearview mirror just in case the Government was ready with some clear guidelines based on the benefits of thorough research.

But the road appeared to be clear so the industry pressed ahead despite severe reservations about what might yet appear round the corner.

As always the rule being applied throughout the industry was to keep to schedule which, in the case of seatbelts, was 10 February 1997 for minibuses and post-1988 coaches, older coaches following 12 months later.

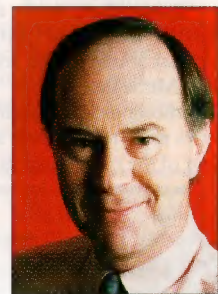
Little did we realise that warning signs appearing in the rearview mirror had not been recognised.

Without so much as a flashing blue light the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions was approaching with rules that threaten to put large numbers of coaches with retrofit seatbelts on the hard shoulder.

I refer to the consultation paper on seatbelts and the MOT. Over the last month the seriousness of the threat posed by the proposals has spread alarm among operators and there is no doubt that this industry believes the DETR has got it wrong. Over 98% of CBW readers said "NO" when asked: "Should the Government go ahead with its untested seatbelt proposal?"

But, so far, there has been no response from the corridors of power in Marsham Street. The Department is, apparently, unrepentant.

It may need a legal challenge to put this nasty piece of ill-timed intervention off the road. Whatever it takes - the proposals in their present shape must be stopped.



MIKE MORGAN, Editor

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Rotherham firm's Vision of the future

THE LATEST in a line of midcoaches to reach the British market is being manufactured in Rotherham.

SC Coachcraft's Vision is a 35-seater based on Mercedes-Benz' front-engined 817L chassis... already popular in Germany for school buses, says its designer John Seale.

"The basis of the design concept was to take a proven chassis and, despite its limitations, create a vehicle which looks much the same as a full-sized coach," said Mr Seale, a former Autobus Classique design engineer.

"The advantage in using this particular chassis is that it already has a number of passenger-friendly features, such as the rear air suspension, as a result of its use as a PSV."

The Vision is conventionally steel-framed, with aluminium side panels and roof, and GRP front and rear. Side windows are bonded, but the windscreen gasket-glazed to aid serviceability. As with most front-engined midcoaches, the Overton in-swing power door has had to be positioned behind the front wheels.

"We did look at getting the entrance in front of the axle, but the resulting steps are just too tortuous," said Mr Seale.

Current production has a six-cylinder 170bhp engine but this will shortly be replaced by M-B's new 900-series engine - a four-cylinder, electronically-controlled unit which will offer good economy and lower noise levels.

"But we have made a successful effort to insulate against sound at the front," said Mr Seale.

Among more unusual features are a raised 'pod' at the rear of the roof, which is used to accommodate air conditioning equipment and forced-air fans, and a 'spoiler' on the blank rear.

"This wing section is partly for styling and a place for lettering, but also helps reduce the 'dead' air behind a coach which causes the rear panel to get so dirty. After 350 miles on a damp motorway, I can confirm it works," said Mr Seale.

The midcoach will sell for £84,000.

'No significant barriers' to the acquisition of London Coaches Arriva set to buy open-top

By Mark Barton

NEWLY-NAMED ARRIVA looks set to pull off one of the year's surprise acquisitions when it announces the expected purchase of the open-top sightseeing business of London Coaches this week.

The Original London Sightseeing Tour runs around 50 vehicles and has valuable riverside premises in Jews Row, Wandsworth.

It took over the sightseeing business of Blue Triangle of Rainham earlier this year.

Due diligence on the business, which is run by London Coaches Limited, is understood to have been carried out and no significant barriers to completion uncovered.

Operating in a traditionally high margin business under managing director Keith Spicer, the London sightseeing operation is believed to have made nearly £1 million profit on turnover of around £6 million in the year to 31 August 1997.

The group as a whole posted pre-tax profits of

£608,000 on sales of £12.8 million in the same period.

The Arriva deal is expected to cover London Coaches' sightseeing business only and none of the other businesses owned by parent company the Pullmans Group.

The group, run by managing director and chairman Pat Waterman and finance director, Philip Hunt, also owns a significant commuter coach operation running from Kent into London. Trading through London Coaches (Kent) Limited, the

operation includes the former Grey-Green commuter business bought from Cowie (now Arriva) last year and the Invictaway commuter coach business bought from Cowie this Summer.

Pullmans also owns Kent Coachworks, a coach building, vehicle repair and paintshop operation; a business consultancy arm and Eastern Counties Personnel Training Limited.

The group's origins go back to a management buy-out of the then London

Norris attacks deregulation

FORMER TORY transport minister Steven Norris set the CPT's annual conference alight with a hard-hitting attack on the deregulated bus market. He admitted the previous Government was wrong to "have burnt, in the great bonfire of deregulation, every single one of the controls."

Mr Norris proposes new powers for traffic commissioners as he challenged Labour to build on the benefits of the last 11 years.

Traffic commissioners already have power over O-licences and should, according to Mr Norris, also regulate bus service headways, enforce provision of timetable information and be given authority to force compensation to be paid by local authorities who fail to meet their part of Quality Partnership agreements.

Mr Norris, who retired from Parliament at the last election, taking up the posts of Capital Citybus chairman and director general of the Road Haulage Association, described unfettered deregulation as "vague ideological

madness," whereas a return to local authority control would be "ludicrous."

He said the Government integrated transport policy "must ensure that we keep the best of competition and blend it with the kind of quality thresholds that make that system work."

Claiming to be the original author of quality partnerships, Mr Norris said he could not accept the notion that any barrier or any regulation was anti-competitive.

Quality partnerships rely on two active partners - local authorities supplying the infrastructure and bus operators the quality service. However, at present, Quality Partnerships could fail to achieve their potential. Mr Norris said: "It is pointless to provide lowfloor access if we don't have some mechanism for wheeling buggies and pushchairs on to the bus."

However, he underpinned his support for quality partnerships with his suggested far-reaching, radical enforcement regime. Given imper-

fections in the current relationship in protecting an agreement whereby the local authority provides the infrastructure and the operator provides new or reasonably new pushes, Mr Norris proposes that traffic commissioners have additional responsibilities.

Calling for an early Bus Act, the former Tory minister warned that standards are best determined locally. "Never make the perfect the enemy of the good," he said, preferring quality standards to be established by willing local partners supported by statutory rights given to the Traffic Commissioners to discriminate against those who cannot meet the quality standard agreed.

He said they should only register competing services which run at the same level of quality and they should have power to regulate headways, preventing operators from running within minutes of each other using timetables designed to frustrate the opposition rather than spaced out for the benefit of



Steve Norris: 'madness' customers.

Provision of adequate timetable information should be a clear responsibility of the operator, said Mr Norris. But this has become a grey area and he proposed a solution whereby, should passenger information be inadequate, the traffic commission stepped in using its own data base to produce timetables, charging operators accordingly.

Mr Norris described his proposals as a "fairly straight forward model." He dismissed the idea that voluntary quality partnerships can prosper, saying: "Every single quality partnership is prone to 'one cowboy killing all the good Indians'."

■ Conference report, ps8&9

London 'not benefitted from privatisation'

PRIVATISATION of London's buses has not produced a network responsive to passenger needs, says one of its architects, former minister Steven Norris.

He told the CPT annual conference that, although when in Parliament he was convinced that a privatised regime

would be responsive, it hasn't happened. Mr Norris said: "There must be reasons but I can't think why."

According to Mr Norris, who is chairman of Capital Citybus, operators should be able to tender for parcels of routes and flexibility over route ends,

bringing into London some of the benefits of what goes on elsewhere.

He also questioned the cost-effectiveness of the London regime: "I'm not sure that, if you look at cost per mile, we're getting very good value for money in London now."

capital sightseeing business operation?

Coaches business from public ownership in May 1992. Only Pat Waterman remains of the original buyout team.

Following the departure of three of the founding shareholders, a deal was struck earlier this year with NatWest Pioneer Fund under which ownership of the group passed to HW Trading Associates Limited.

HW Trading Associates is a holding company controlled by the directors of the Pullmans Group, but supported by a substantial invest-

ment from the Pioneer Fund, which now owns a 10% stake in the group.

Arriva is the new name for Cowie which, with around 7,000 vehicles, claims to be the UK's second largest bus operator. Headed up by Gordon Hodgson, it owns four London operators: South London, Leaside, County Bus and Grey-Green, which between them run over 1,400 vehicles. Other operations include Countybus and dealership Arriva Bus and Coach - formerly Hughes DAF



Sale of open-toppers would leave London Coaches with express and private hire ops

Stagecoach profits soar

STAGECOACH has recorded interim profits up 50% on turnover which has risen 68% in six months.

Turnover of £681.5 million (1996: £405.1 million) resulted in £70.5 million pre-tax profit (1996: £47 million). The core of the company is still its bus division, which netted £381.6 million turnover and £43.5 million in the six months until 31 October. Of this, £130.9 million turnover and £7.8 million profit came from Swebus, and a modest £17 million turnover and £1.6 million profit from other overseas operations.

South West Trains contributed £151.9 million turnover and £7.8 million profit, and Porterbrook leasing a staggering £62.7 million profit on only £136 million turnover... a margin of 46%!

Machins Coaches to close

LEICESTERSHIRE operator, Machins Coaches, is to close after 60 years' trading.

The Ashby de la Zouch company run by Philip Davis is being wound down so that Mr Davis can spend more time with his family: "The business has become more cut-throat but the main reason is that I have two small

children," Mr Davis told CBW. Machins was in its diamond jubilee year, having been established as a limited company in 1937 by Lionel and Gertrude Machin.

"The business had changed in the six years I've been running it," said Mr Davis.

"We were running our own tours, and there was less

emphasis on school contracts."

Mr Davis said he is selling the 16 vehicles and making his five full-time drivers redundant. He has not decided what to do with the premises.

THE established company Daisy Bus Services and its operating company Ermine International based at Brigg, North Lincolnshire, have gone into liquidation.

The closure of the company doors several weeks ago left around £100,000 in debt, but ended competition for neighbouring Hornsby Travel Services on its Brigg-Broughton-Scunthorpe commercial bus route.

"We were nonetheless sorry to see Daisy go," said md Nigel Hornsby. "It was healthy competition. As a result of their departure, we have restructured the service, and also picked up school work from the council."

Another op for W&D

WILTS & DORSET has bought another coach operation in Wessex.

Lavers Coaches of East Knoyle, near Salisbury, follows Damorys Coaches of Blandford and Tourist Coaches of Salisbury into the operator's portfolio. The latest acquisition adds 18 vehicles and smart premises plus goodwill and all staff.

"We believe Lavers fits quite well with our operation," said md Hugh Malone. It gives us another major base in Salisbury."

Mr Malone said Lavers would be left much as it is: "We will be building on the success it already is," he said. We were particularly impressed with the fleet, which has been very well maintained, and are pleased to be taking on the drivers."



Ermine International: casualty with Daisy Bus

Reliant set for sale to Caetano

IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL at operator Reliant of Leicestershire as the family-owned business prepares for sale to Salvador Caetano UK, the coach dealer which shares the same site at Heather.

From early January SC(UK), the UK subsidiary of Portuguese coachbuilder, Salvador Caetano takes control of 15-vehicle Reliant from owner, Mrs Winnie Briers, widow of Roy Briers who died in 1992 shortly after taking delivery of new Caetano-bodied DAF

SB3000 (right). Mr Briers formed Reliant in 1964 when he led a nucleus of drivers previously employed by Browns Blue of Markfield which had a network of stage carriage services in addition to coaches when taken over by Midland Red.

Reliant has since concentrated on private hire and contracts while Midland Red absorbed the bus routes. CBW expects Reliant to continue as a separate coach operation under SC(UK) control.



Caetano's own operator: Reliant shares site

in brief

■ **THE Government's cars** are to get dual-fuel conversions to either LPG or CNG. The Government Car Service is having refuelling facilities installed for both gases at its south London depot. So far, the Government car fleet has a CNG Rover 800 and an LPG-converted Ford Galaxy.

■ **CHESTER CITY COUNCIL** is to introduce real-time count-down information for its Park and Ride from Chester Zoo. Supplied by JMW of Midlothian, the system uses induction loops on the road surface to update displays at the bus stops. Mid-way loops installed along the Liverpool Road corridor add accuracy to the 'estimated time of arrival' system.

■ **HERTFORDSHIRE County Council, St Albans City, Rail-track and Thameslink** joined forces to complete a £500,000 modernisation of the rail-bus interchange at St Albans. The new facility has four bus bays and pedestrian walkways to the rail station. It is part of Herts' TravelWise project, which includes integrated ticketing and Smart-card technology.

■ **THE Rural Development Commission** says rural communities are either car-dependent or isolated by lack of public transport. In its submission to the Government's transport review, the RDC says rural employers could be hit hard by increased car 'taxes' including road pricing if new bus services are not provided. It suggests area franchising as one way to develop bus services.

■ **THE Great Britain Bus Timetable** is to be sold through WH Smiths for the first time. The definitive guide to inter-urban buses, produced by Southern Vectis, is to be available throughout the UK in its Winter edition, valid until the New Year, and in subsequent editions.

■ **EASTLEIGH-BASED South Coast Travel** has asked us to point out that it has no connection with South Coast Coaches of Eastbourne, (CBW, 13 November) which has lost its O-licence. The original story made this clear.

■ **THE AA** says that there were 33,000 traffic snarl-ups this Summer, beating the previous year by 10%. Worst-hit area was the south east, but drivers caused other hold-ups by changing route and clogging surrounding roads, says the AA. The worst jam was a 45-miler on the M5 in Gloucestershire.



M4 coach and bus lane only small part of £500 million package

Staff enticed into taking public transport

Free bus tickets to lure car drivers

By Mark Williams

HEATHROW AIRPORT is giving away £300 bus season tickets to get its Slough workers out of their cars.

Part of the airport's £0.5 billion campaign, the scheme will give all staff living in the A4 corridor free travel for 12 months, using Beeline's routes 74, 75 and 76 running through Slough, Langley and Heathrow. Peak frequency of the buses is 20 minutes.

The Heathrow Travelcard used on the journey is being used by staff throughout the country as the airport tries to reduce congestion. Costing £30 a month or £300 a year, Travelcard is valid on 16 Heathrow bus services running to 85 towns and villages. Some staff even make the journey from Norwich and Cambridge to work.

"This latest initiative celebrates three years' work developing bus services

from Slough, and offers Slough-based employees a real alternative to using the car to get to work," said Heathrow's md Roger Cato.

More than 2,000 Heathrow staff live around Slough. Among recent initiatives, a Hotel Hoppa service was introduced from the major airport hotels to reduce the amount of courtesy bus traffic, and the airport has become recipient of the traffic from Britain's first motorway bus lane.

GAG endorses 'clean' diesel

GO-AHEAD has signed up the London, Oxford and Brighton arms of its 2,400-bus fleet to run on Shell's ultra-low sulphur diesel, Advanced XL.

The low-emission fuel - the only diesel of its type made in the UK - is expected to cut smoke emissions by 30%, and improve the image of GAG's buses. The contract lasts two years, during which GAG is expected to use 26 million litres of fuel.

"We have transferred the greater part of our London bus fleet to Shell Advanced

XL," said Go-Ahead group engineering director Alan Eatwell. "Reducing emissions in heavily-congested operation is part of our drive to ensure public transport becomes cleaner than ever."

As well as reducing sulphur and black smoke emissions, Advanced XL has anti-foaming agent for faster filling, anti-corrosion additives and has guaranteed lubricity.

● A COUNTY council grant has brought Shell Advanced XL to the Arriva group's Hertfordshire buses.



Alan Eatwell (right): drive to cleaner emissions

As part of its wide-ranging public transport initiative, Hertfordshire County Council has put £12,000 towards the premium

Buses could be run on rubbish

DURHAM buses could be running on rubbish by 1999 if a new project gets the thumbs-up from the council, waste management and local operators.

SUSBUS is aiming to use methane 'biogas' extracted from landfill sites to power vehicles including buses. Similar projects are already working in Sweden and South Africa, says project co-ordinator Greg Miller.

"We are about to set up a company which will implement a one-year trial testing both the quantity and quality of the gas you can get from landfill," said Mr Miller, a graduate from Leeds who has been looking at the biogas issue for two years. "One of the first stages is working out how cost-effective the plan could be."

Mr Miller said that much of the research into the fiscal areas of biogas - looking at how the tax system will affect viability - was done in the last 12 months. Much of the technology on which the project has been based comes from South Africa.

"There's a lot of work to be done before the first vehicles are running on biogas," said Mr Miller.

● VOLVO toured Britain this year with a waste truck powered by methane 'biogas'. The vehicle is one of a fleet of council-run biogas vehicles in use in Sweden, where buses are also run on the fuel.



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President: 'Almost a revolution'

THE LAST 12 months have been exciting and almost revolutionary, according to this year's CPT president and FirstGroup chief executive Moir Lockhead.

Excitement, he said, had come in the rate of progress now seen in the introduction of accessible buses and intermodal ticketing while, after only 11 years, the deregulated bus industry was providing services that match customer need.

Revolution, he said, was the result of the new Government coming to power and he welcomed the Government's request for ideas in the build up to the transport White Paper.

However, in his introduction to transport minister, Gavin Strang, Mr Lockhead reinforced the CPT's submission that the Government should not undermine the benefits of a deregulated industry which, supported by the national training organisation, TransFED, employs quality staff, providing quality service, using quality vehicles. Addressing Dr Strang, he said: "Don't impose any regulation that strangles innovation. Don't impose a layer of bureaucracy."

"Modal shift," said Mr Lockhead, "is best achieved in association with local authorities with Quality Partnerships as a cornerstone."

However, at the end of the day's programme, the president warned CPT members against complacency. He said: "The case for Quality Partnerships is not yet won. We must continue to deliver quality and the CPT has much to do to counter the perception that commercialisation hasn't raised standards."

Calling upon the Government to revise its fiscal policies, he said; "Fuel Duty Rebate must be restored to its full value."



Lockhead: 'no bureaucracy'



Dr Gavin Strang: 'will be looking for a lot more from our bus services'

Minister spells Strang:

By Mike Morgan

COMFORTING words from transport minister Gavin Strang greeted delegates to the Confederation of Passenger Transport annual conference which was held in Glasgow last week.

Despite a 'long, hard look' Dr Strang said there was no decision yet on any proposed new framework for regulating local bus services but he promised a review of Fuel Duty Rebate and confirmed that Quality Partnership initiatives had a role as a means of promoting higher use of bus services: "We are going to look for a lot more from our bus services in the future," he said.

"We want people to use their cars

Bus industry faces challenge in fight against congestion and pollution

1A CHALLENGE faces the bus industry in the run-up to the new Millennium, the conference was told. It is to provide the right formula to meet the growing realisation that public transport in general, and the bus in particular, is expected to provide the solutions to the problems of traffic congestion and pollution.

Picking up the theme of this year's CPT annual conference, 'Operating for Quality - Sustainability and the Environment', the line-up of speakers at The Thistle Hotel in Glasgow presented an optimistic forecast for growth in bus passenger numbers as the predicted modal shift from car to public transport gathered pace.

Professor Jose Manuel Viegas, chief executive officer of TIS, a consultancy based in Portugal, said that, while quality was the industry buzzword, it was clear its predominant attitude remains product orientated.

For the industry to match the needs of its customers it had to be more sophisticated in how it measured the quality of the service supplied.

Benchmarking quality was essential to avoid previous poor service lowering expectations and operators must understand what affects the outcomes of quality initiatives. There were two measures, he said, internal and external.

Dr Viegas advised his audience to redefine what is meant by public transport, bringing new types of clients into the sector. He suggested some market-breaking initiatives that could face up to the challenge: real

time on-screen information which could be called up on a PC at work; reserved seats; door-to-door late-night services; intelligent bus lanes which can be switched from bus to car.

Stephen Connock, chief executive of the newly-formed Institute of Customer Service, introduced the conference to benefits of membership of the professional association which will offer three tiers of qualification from NVQ up to degree when it comes on stream next Summer.

Professor Carmen Hass-Klau from the University of Wuppertal in Germany, questioned the limits to which a privatised industry can achieve quality service without Government intervention. She said: "I don't think that a privatised company can provide all the quality we need."

Environment Agency spokesman, Colin Foan, announced the start of a quantitative risk assessment to identify the effects of different types of pollution. Road transport is thought to make a significant contribution to overall pollution levels but the full effects of a change, such as the switch to low-sulphur diesel, need to be understood.

Peter Sephton of the Mainline Group said that the recent hike in fuel duty added £1 million to the cost of diesel for his company. The result is a loss of 1-1.5% of passengers, which was not helping the environment. Mr Foan replied that the Environment Agency's risk assessment will help avoid making wrong decisions in the future.

Robert Missen from the European Commission's transport branch, DG VII, brought the conference up to date on the progress of the controversial bus construction directive which is framed with the single market in mind.

He reminded the CPT that it was not too late to make changes to the rules that will shape the coaches and buses throughout the EU from around the year 2000. "UK MEPs have enormous power," he said, having explained that the Socialist Group is the largest group in the European Parliament and Labour is the largest among the Socialists.

In addition the UK has the presidency from 1 January 1998, giving this country the power to amend, suspend or simply put-off proposed legislation. In addition to coach and bus construction, the issue of 15-metre maximum length will appear before the council during the UK presidency.

Bob McLeod, managing director of Hughes DAF (Arriva Coach and Bus from 1 January) asked Mr Missen if the UK's derogation on axle weights is expected to last beyond 1 January 1999. Mr Missen explained that 18 tonnes for two-axle coaches would become legal from that date for all international journeys but the UK Government may decide to fix the lower 17-tonne limit for national journeys.

Ron Whittle said the proposed construction directive was the final piece in the jigsaw of whole vehicle type approval across the EU.

out transport policy to CPT Conference in keynote address 'green' issues the key

less. For most this will mean turning to public transport and in many cases the only option is the bus."

Dr Strang's keynote address focused on the Bus Review which started five months ago together with the issue of integrated transport and the Government's White Paper promised for publication in May next year.

He said the environmental agenda was driving transport policy and, despite the slowing down of long-term decline, the challenge to be faced was how to reverse the reduction in local bus use. However, he warned bringing about a modal shift from car use to public transport use was complex. He said: "Since 1950 no single policy has succeeded."

Although Dr Strang acknowledged

that buses have a role in meeting transport policy objectives, he spelt out that integration was at three levels:

- Practical issues such as ticketing and information
- Managing demand for road space
- The influence of transport on other policies aimed at bringing about 'a more fair and just society'

He said the industry had to be aware that there was concern about emissions and announced that the Government was looking at ways of extending the use of low-emissions fuel by such policies as freeing duty on liquid gas.

Acknowledging the industry's demands for reinstatement of the full value of Fuel Duty Rebate, Dr Strang said: "Officials are working with the

Treasury to review this a part of the Bus Review."

Meanwhile, by driving forward new vehicle technology to reduce emissions even further, he said the Government wanted to encourage faster progress towards getting rid of older vehicles on the road. This, he said, would make it a lot harder for the 'cowboy' operator and enhance the good work that has already been done.

■ Some European countries consider Fuel Duty Rebate to be a form of government subsidy and, therefore, an example of market distortion. However, an EU code of conduct aimed at reducing harmful fiscal competition between member states is not expected to include fuel excise duty.

Diesel 'most efficient'

THE most efficient power source for coaches and buses is still diesel, says Michael Galey, sales manager for Eminox, who presented the CPT conference with first results from a two-year strategy to clean up the exhaust on the long-lived London Routemaster.

Mr Galey said the tests sponsored by London Transport Buses included 'real-world' testing at Millbrook. Significant reductions in pollutants, including particulates, were achieved using ultra-low sulphur city diesel and separately when a catalyst was fitted.

However, the combined effect of catalyst and city diesel was greater than the individual reduction and, although the catalyst can be used with any diesel, it works best with city diesel.

Nevertheless, the Continuously Regenerating Trap type catalyst with 'wall-flow filter' only works on a turbo-charged engine and only with ultra-low sulphur fuel.

Tests on a London Olympian have confirmed reductions in emissions and a study by Stagecoach Swedish subsidiary, Swebus, which costed the savings from reduced emissions across 50 buses, produced a per-bus saving to the environment of £3,500, giving a pay-back time of around 5.5/7 years.

Brian Fisher, managing director of Plymouth Citybus, said that operators using ultra-low sulphur faced more expensive fuel costs. Although a premium of around 1p per litre is usual, this is directly related to transport costs and could be as high as 3.5/4p per litre depending on location.

Robbie Duncan of First-Group asked which fuel the speakers expected would be used to power buses by the year 2020. Colin Foan, who is taking a particular interest in the quality of road transport fuels and the associated environment implications related to refineries on behalf of the Environment Agency, said he expected fuel cells to be available by around 2030.

■ **Millbrook testing p24.**
Millbrook/ LTB trials: full report next week

Top training awards presented

RENNIES of Dunfermline and Ipswich Buses received top industry training awards from TransFED, the National Training Organisation, at the CPT conference in Glasgow.

The awards recognise the companies leading the way on implementing training and development programmes to improve business quality and performance.

Rennies received the award for achievement of sector targets following a programme that resulted in its drivers achieving the level 2 Scottish Vocational Qualification and committing itself to the new level 3 qualification for all its drivers.

Ipswich Buses received the award for innovative training after implementing a comprehensive programme to maximise its investment in lowfloor buses by ensuring that staff were trained in disability awareness, quality issues and the achievement of the drivers' NVQ.

TransFED chief executive, Malcolm Humphreys, said: "Rennies and Ipswich Buses have been justifiably recognised for their achievement and the message for the rest of the industry is that both companies, and all those in close second and third places, were motivated by sound business needs. Better trained people means better business results all round."

Midland Red North and Rossendale Transport took second and third places in the Sector Targets Award, whereas, for the Innovative Training Award, Metroline Travel was second and Johnsons Coach Travel was third.

The Awards were presented by guest speaker and legendary Formula One driver, Jackie Stewart.



Commitment to NVQ level 3 helped Rennies win TransFED award



Ipswich Buses: innovative training matched lowfloor investment

Managers in front line

VOLVO BUS'S decision to sponsor the 1998 Coach Manager of the Year award underlines the importance of the passenger, says the Warwick-based company.

Volvo Bus says the advances made throughout the industry are of no use without passengers, and that passengers won't change the car habit if the industry's managers can't get the message across.

"The Coach Industry Awards reflect the increasingly high levels of excellence and professionalism within the passenger transport industry," said Mike Ball, Volvo Bus md. "And it is a face of our industry that all should feel some responsibility for, in promoting to those who matter - including existing and potential coach travellers."

Mr Ball said the industry as a whole shared the responsibility of improving services, but that the buck stopped with the coach manager.

"We sponsor the Coach Manager of the Year because we feel that he or she is one of - or perhaps



the only - pivotal links between the company and the passenger," said Mr Ball. "That is not to underestimate the valuable role of the coach driver but, in most companies, the coach manager is the person involved in recruiting the front-line people.

"So the coach company's reputation is very much in the coach manager's hands. He or she is the person who brings all the threads together. This has to be achieved within a highly competitive market at a price the customer views as excellent value

"Volvo Bus looks forward to the Coach Industry Awards," said Mr Ball. "We are pleased to provide the opportunity for the person who is viewed to be the most professional within his peer group - both by his colleagues and the industry - to be recognised as Coach Manager of the Year."

Newcomers start Kent corridor services

London commuter coach competition

By Mark Williams

SOUTH EAST London's commuter coach scene has been shaken up by the arrival of two newcomers to Kent corridors.

Reliance of Gravesend has resurrected its Higham-Gravesend-London route in response, it says, to requests from commuters disgruntled with North Kent Express (NKE), now part of Pullmans Group. And another company, Tims Travel, has started a commuter service in competition with established operator Chalkwell.

"I'm pleased to report that our service is going fairly well," said Reliance's transport manager Paul Hockley. "We use three coaches on the morning run and four in the afternoon, charging £1,050 a year.

"We used to do this commuter service three years



North Kent Express: facing challenge from Reliance

ago, then pulled out when North Kent Express came along with lower prices. Since then, the price has gone up and we began getting calls from our old commuters asking us to start again."

To woo passengers, Reliance offers NKE season ticket holders a free test ride. It says the service is expected to be expanded in February.

The Tims Travel service which serves the Isle of Sheppey is believed to be run as a commuter club, and so is not required to be registered. CBW was unable to contact the company before going to press.

Meanwhile, North Kent Express is hovering at the edge of the territory of established operator The King's Ferry.

Tour gives unique chance to see US coach operation

NEWS of our CBW Study Tour USA has created quite a stir among UK coach and bus operators. Interest is high and bookings are already coming in.

Operators are keen to see the American coach and bus business for themselves. And who can blame them?

After all, America is one of the biggest, brightest, most fascinating of all markets, which holds business lessons for us all.

And what better way to see it than in the company of like-minded colleagues and under the guidance of an expert tour leader.

Next year's CBW Study Tour USA takes in the famous Motorcoach Expo in California's Sacramento and the stunning sights of San Francisco.

Organised by the United Motorcoach Association, the annual Motorcoach Expo is a winning combination of major coach show,



Join CBW and Tappins on the trip of a lifetime

business sessions, day tours and social events.

Our five-night tour includes entrance to the show and business sessions, plus admission to the evening opening night reception at the California State Railroad Museum.

Bound to attract strong interest is the business session dealing with the rise and rise of Coach USA. In under two years, Coach USA has bought out over 25 family-owned coach compa-

nies and now runs more than 2,000 coaches.

Our study tour will offer a unique chance to see exactly how it is working out.

We are also arranging a special forum where UK coach operators can compare and contrast their operations with US operators. That will be another great opportunity to pick up new business ideas.

After Motorcoach Expo, we will leave the luxury of

Sacramento's Hilton Hotel for two days in the city of San Francisco.

Here there are eight primary public transport systems and 17 other local operators providing service.

Try for yourself the city's famous cable cars, trolleybuses, buses and BART light-rail system, which runs under San Francisco Bay. The trip also includes an inside VIP tour of a major coach operator in the Bay area.

It's definitely a trip not to

be missed. And from £985 per person, demand (as usual) is high. Airline arrangements mean space is strictly limited, so make sure of your place and book NOW.

The 1998 CBW Study Tour USA leaves London Heathrow on Saturday 31 January and returns on Friday 6 February.

Full details are available from Paul Tappin at Tappins Coaches, Didcot on 01235 819393. Fax: 01235 816464. (ATOL 4686)

CBW Study Tour USA

Highlights

Sacramento 31 Jan - 3 Feb

Motorcoach Expo. Opening night reception; business sessions, tours and full show access. Business sessions include spotlight on Coach USA.

San Francisco 3 Feb - 5 Feb

Public transport systems: cable car, tram, trolleybus, BART light rail. VIP visit to local coach operator in Bay area. Sightseeing.

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49/53 recliners, grey graffiti moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, courier seat, wired TV/video, power entrance door, finished all white. M.O.T. OCTOBER 1998

1994 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-HE 12M

48/50 recliners, beige/orange moquette, rear sunken demountable toilet, continental door, SUTRAK AIR CONDITIONING, double glazed tinted side windows with blinds and decorative curtains, aircraft style lockers to hatracks, courier seat, fully carpeted, no rear window, Eberspacher pre-heater, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, finished cream. CHOICE OF 2. M.O.T.'s FEBRUARY 1998

1992 SCANIA K93 CRB VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

51/55 recliners, beige/orange moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet, continental door, tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, Webasto pre-heater, wired TV/video, finished all white. M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1991 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M

49 recliners, grey/orange moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet, continental door, tinted side windows with blinds, courier seat, water boiler, power entrance door, finished all white. M.O.T. OCT. 1998

1990 VOLVO B9M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

40 recliners, orange/black moquette, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, courier seat, Eberspacher pre-heater, power entrance door, finished white/orange. M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1998

1989 BOVA FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M

49 recliners, grey/blue moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, driver's berth, water boiler, coolbox, wired TV/video, power entrance door, finished all white. M.O.T. JANUARY 1998

1989 (August) DAF DKFL VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

51 recliners, brown/orange moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, wired TV/video, finished white/blue. M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1998

1989 DAF SB2300 VAN HOOL ALIZEE-DH 12M

Low driving position, 51 recliners, grey/red/orange moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, twin TV monitors, wired for video, power entrance door, finished all white. M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M

49 recliners, red/grey/orange moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, courier seat, water boiler, power entrance door, finished all white. M.O.T. JULY 1998

1988 LAG PANORAMIC INTEGRAL 12M

49 recliners, grey/yellow/beige moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, coolbox wired TV/video, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, finished all white. M.O.T. JANUARY 1999

1988 DAF SB3000 JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P599 12M

51 Vogel recliners, grey/red/blue moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with blinds, courier seat, water boiler, fridge, wired TV/video, power entrance door, finished all white. M.O.T. MAY 1998

1987 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

49 recliners, brown/orange moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with blinds, courier seat, water boiler, fridge, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, finished metallic silver. M.O.T. JANUARY 1999

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Group appeal: Coachsaver fares on offer to Holland

Stena out to Hook mini-break market

STENA Line is introducing a Coachsaver fare programme on its HSS service from Harwich to the Hook of Holland as part of a campaign to expand the Dutch short-break market.

Coachsavers are available on the early-morning departure from Holland and on the evening sailing from Harwich. Rates start at £249 for a single-decker coach travelling off-peak and rise to £599 in the Summer, representing savings ranging from £500 to £900 on standard return fares.

Two excursion returns - based on 48 or 120 hours - are also available, with fares from as little as £10 and £12 per adult respectively.

David Stamp, Stena Line national sales manager, said: "Group organisers have

been quick to recognise the benefits of the new fast service and we expect it to be an increasingly-attractive alternative to the short-sea routes for many operators in 1998.

"The speed of the HSS - the crossing time is cut by half to three hours and 40 minutes - and the attractiveness of the return fare should prove an ideal combination for further developing the Dutch mini-break market."

All Stena Line's Coachsaver fares are covered by a new Customer Service Guarantee, which sets out the minimum service levels an operator can expect when transacting business with the company.

This also covers compensation payments should there be sailing amendments, delays or cancellations.

Shearings' 38th hotel

SHEARINGS Holidays has added a 38th property to its rapidly-expanding hotel chain by acquiring the three-star Imperial Hotel, in Tenby.

The company plans to operate the hotel year-round, marketing it to both the coach and the private leisure markets. Situated on the clifftop overlooking the resort's South Beach, the Imperial has three bars, a restaurant and two dance floor areas.

The 44-room Imperial, which was previously in private hands, is the fifth hotel bought by Shearings this year. The purchase follows Shearings' decision to increase

from 65 to around 80% the number of its UK bookings catered for by its own hotels.

This enables the UK's largest coach holiday operator to exert greater control over product standards and enjoy improved margins.

Vince Flower, Shearings' operations director, said: "The Imperial is well-situated in a resort which is very popular with Shearings' holiday-makers.

"The quality of the rooms and facilities, as well as its location in the very heart of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, means it is ideally suited to our business needs."

Police called as tempers flare over refusal to Driver 'violence'

By William Golden

ABUSIVE and threatening coach drivers who refused to pay parking charges at this year's Weston-super-Mare charity carnival have been condemned by the event's co-ordinator, who is a local coach operator.

The annual event attracted more than 200 coaches to the Somerset resort and Brian Coombs, procession convener, said

that the police had to intervene when some drivers, who would not pay the £15 coach park charge, became abusive and used threatening behaviour to volunteer attendants.

In the worst incidents, three drivers left their vehicles to threaten the volunteers - one of whom was a young woman - and the situation was only resolved when two police motorcyclists arrived and stayed on

the scene for the rest of the evening. Earlier, there had been other instances of drivers using abusive language and several threatening physical violence.

Mr Coombs, of Coombs Coaches, is responsible for co-ordinating coach parking for the annual carnival weekend, which is held at the end of November.

He said the vast majority of drivers were well-behaved and paid the



Meal stop: the group at the Coaching House restaurant in Smithills Country Park

Wander around Bolton

MORE than 50 representatives from coach companies, tour operators and social clubs joined the first familiarisation visit organised by Bolton Tourism.

The weekend was organised as part of a drive to promote Bolton's potential to the coach tour market as a day excursion and short-break destination. The itinerary included visits to Warburton's Bakery, the largest independent bakery in Britain, and the award-winning House of Raja's, an Asian superstore where the group sampled the home-made food and tried on saris.

Other destinations visited included the Last Drop Village, Smithills Hall and Country Park, and Middlebrook, a major devel-

opment that includes the Reebok Stadium - Bolton Wanderers' new football ground.

More information about organising group visits to Bolton is available from tourism officer Barbara Howorth on 01204 522311 (extension 4059).

● Bolton Tourism also organised a day visit to the town for a group of more than a dozen Blue Badge Guides. Steve Hynes, chairman of Bolton's tourism working party, said: "Blue Badge Guides are a great way of bringing an area's history and developments to life. We are hopeful that Bolton can join the Blue Badge network and that more and more people will be attracted to our town in the months to come."

pay carnival parking charges

condemned

charge, but he condemned a "cowboy" minority who seemed determined to caused trouble.

"The carnival is a charity event and those operators - and their passengers - who do not wish to contribute should stay away," said Mr Coombs.

"Our street collection this year was £16,536, some £1,300 down on last year. With crowds estimated at 120,000, this equates to

approximately 13 pence each. Advance notice of the coach park charges were given earlier in the year and all operators on the council's database were notified about the details for this year's event."

Weston-super-Mare's big parade traditionally ends the seven-event carnival season in Somerset and it raises funds to cover prizes for competitors and to help local charities.

Fine for no bonding

A COACH driver, who became a director of Hutchinsons Tours Ltd, trading as Monks European Tours, has been ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £640 for failing to ensure that money paid for three booked tours was covered by a bond or insurance.

Alice Churton, of Hesketh Street, Leigh, Lancashire, admitted the offence when she appeared before the town's magistrates.

For Ms Churton, John Birtwell said that she had been a coach driver for 25 years.

After she had acquired

shares in the company, it began to have difficulties and she worked long hours to try to build the business up and turn it round. She lost £7,500 when the company went into liquidation in October 1996.

Ms Churton had been heavily engaged in driving and had been completely in the dark as to how the business was being run, said Mr Birtwell. She did not realise that there had to be bonding or insurance. The magistrates fined Ms Churton £300 and ordered her to pay £340 towards the costs of the prosecution.



Ready to roll: National Express is operating out of Bridgwater's new coach station

New coach station opens

OPERATORS running coaches to and from Somerset should benefit from the opening of a new coach station in Bridgwater.

Sedgemoor District Council provided the funding for the new station, which is in the centre of the town and has four coach stands. Facilities include a ticket office, buffet service, waiting area and toilets. There also is a large waiting shelter, with another planned, and adjacent car parking. The whole area is covered by CCTV.


Bridgwater's former bus station was converted into a medical centre several years ago, which meant coach passengers had to use the crowded bus depot or wait on the side of the road.

Berry's Coaches, National Express and Badgerline are operating local and long distance services from the new coach station.

Its opening coincides with the Bridgwater Transport Study, which recently has gone through the public consultation stage and includes possible bus lanes and routes in the town.

Parking bays are suspended

WESTMINSTER Council is again suspending the coach parking bays on the north-bound side of Park Lane, to provide setting-down and picking-up points for Christmas shoppers in London. The arrangement runs until Saturday 11 January. Despite lobbying by the Confederation of Passenger Transport, it has not been possible to use North Carriage Drive for a similar arrangement, as in previous years.



EUROWATCH

WEATHER				DIESEL PRICES				HOLIDAY POUND			
City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Amsterdam	5C/41F	Madrid	11C/52F	Austria	0.47	Luxembourg	0.38	Austria	20.20 Sch/£	Italy	2,835 Lire/£
Athens	16C/61F	Oslo	-1F/30F	Belgium	0.48	Netherlands	0.48	Belgium	59.22 BFr/£	Netherlands	3.22 Gld/£
Berlin	-1C/30F	Paris	12C/54F	Eire	0.52	Norway	0.68	Denmark	10.99 K/£	Norway	11.75 NKr/£
Brussels	8C/46F	Rome	19C/66F	France	0.47	Portugal	0.40	Eire	1.097 Punt/£	Portugal	293 Es/£
Dublin	10C/50F	Stockholm	-3C/27F	Germany	0.43	Spain	0.42	France	9.58 F/£	Spain	241 Pta/£
Lisbon	13C/55F	Vienna	4C/39F	Greece	0.39	Sweden	0.56	Germany	2.86 DM/£	Sweden	12.69 SKr/£
Luxembourg	2C/36F	Zurich	2/36F	Italy	0.52	Switzerland	0.56	Greece	452 D/£	Switzerland	2.31 SFr/£

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Domestic Drivers' Hours rules are



LICENSING

THE DOMESTIC drivers' hours rules have been described as "quite hopeless" by South Eastern and Metropolitan traffic commissioner

Brigadier Michael Turner, in a written decision in which he took no action against Angel Motors (Edmonton) Ltd other than to issue the company with a formal warning.

The company, of 1 Constable Crescent, Tottenham, London, which holds an O-licence authorising the operation of 35 vehicles, had been called before the commissioner because of alleged breaches of its undertaking to make proper arrangements to ensure that the rules on drivers' hours were observed and that proper records were kept (CBW, 30 October 30).

Brigadier Turner said that, in 1995, the Vehicle Inspectorate began an investigation into whether or not that undertaking was being complied with. At first the traffic examiners were hampered by a total lack of co-operation by the company's management. That was due to the company being told by its then solicitors that the traffic examiners had no right to demand and take away tachograph charts and other records under the terms of s99 of the Transport Act.

That advice was unfortunate because, while it might have been

No action taken against Angel Motors except warning

taken to be correct in that narrow context, there were other powers given to traffic commissioners and traffic examiners to obtain and analyse records to see that an undertaking made to obtain a licence had been properly complied with.

In practice the refusal to co-operate in any way created an air of suspicion. The first issue was whether a driver who was working on non-regular EU

vers could take rather more than 12 days before taking a weekly rest period. Certainly they were not required to take a rest period after six days under the domestic rules.

The second issue was the recording of hours of work before a vehicle was taken over. It was common ground that the law does not require a driver to open a tachograph record until he takes over a vehicle. However, it was

ing work was followed by domestic driving it should be included in that record.

The next issue was whether or not a driver taking a vehicle home at the end of the day should keep a tachograph record. In the case of *DPP v David Guy* the High Court found that such a record should have been kept. However, that decision followed the VI investigation and the company would not have been aware of it at the time those offences were committed.

Therefore, while there was no doubt that the drivers employed by the company were committing offences by driving home without a chart inserted in the tachograph, the degree of blameworthiness was minimal. The VI evidence showed five daily rest offences, said Brigadier Turner. He had heard no evidence to explain those breaches. In some cases the breaches were not very major in that the rest period had been shortened by minutes rather than hours but the situation would be made worse by the fact that the driver took up part of his rest period taking the vehicle home.

The problems that had arisen over this case reflected only too well the difficulty currently facing the Vehicle Inspectorate when it was trying to

'It is perhaps unfortunate that a very large amount of PSV work, particularly in the area of school contracts, is exempt from the EC Regulations' - Brigadier Michael Turner

work, and thus able to work for 12 days before taking four days rest, broke that cycle if he did any domestic work driving on a regular service with a route of less than 50 kilometres in the middle, which would mean he would have to take a weekly rest period after six days. He agreed with the arguments of Roland Pelly, for the company, that regular services with a route of less than 50 kilometres were not covered by the EU Regulation but were controlled by the domestic rules. Application of those rules meant dri-

vers could take rather more than 12 days before taking a weekly rest period. Certainly they were not required to take a rest period after six days under the domestic rules.

Director Anthony Blondi had admitted that no such record had been kept and that was a deficiency in the company's system. He would suggest that, where drivers took over a vehicle and opened a tachograph chart, they should manually record on that chart any previous work done before commencing driving, said Brigadier Turner. Where early morn-

Jackies Coaches' O-licence



MAINTENANCE

PRINCIPAL PARTNER Duncan Pratt of Jackies Coaches forged inspection records so they appeared to have been completed by a commercial garage he had undertaken would do their maintenance. And now the operation has had its 15-vehicle licence suspended for two weeks as a result.

Duncan and Jacqueline Pratt, trading as Jackies Coaches, of The Old Airfield, Gloucester, appeared before Western traffic commissioner Christopher Heaps at a Cheltenham disciplinary inquiry. DoT vehicle examiner David Pillage said that, in July, he examined seven vehicles, issuing one immediate prohibition and five defect notices. Later the same month a vehicle was given an immediate prohibition in a school bus check which it took four attempts to clear.

The maintenance records were of little use because of the lack of information they contained. Mr Pratt was

unable to produce any invoices from the maintenance contractor, claiming that they were with the firm's accountants for six weeks. He still had not seen them, said Mr Pillage.

Alleging that some of the maintenance records had been concocted, with Mr Pratt signing them in the name of the maintenance contractor, Mr Pillage said that, in his opinion, there had been no improvement since a previous public inquiry in June 1996. He alleged that Mr Pratt had gone to great lengths to avoid having regular safety inspections.

Colin Ward, for the firm, said Mr Pratt had done the inspections himself, but Mr Pillage said it had been agreed inspections would be contracted out. He agreed he had not been back to ask to see the invoices. He also agreed the firm's initial pass rate at annual test was 86 per cent. He was unaware that new workshop facilities had been obtained.

In reply to the commissioner, Mr Pillage said he had noticed something wrong with the signature on some of



Christopher Heaps: regarded Mr Pratt's actions as unacceptable

quite hopeless - commissioner

check up on whether or not operators were complying with the Drivers' Hours and records requirements. Frankly, the domestic rules were quite hopeless, said the commissioner. They did not require any formal record to be kept at all. *De facto*, some record had to be kept otherwise the operator could not know whether or not his drivers were meeting the Drivers' Hours requirements, but those records could be in any format.

EU Regulations were very much better in that they required tachograph records to be kept and there was provision for those records to be annotated manually to record other work which took place before the tachograph was officially brought into use so that a complete and comprehensive record of a driver's working, driving and rest pattern could be established.

It was perhaps unfortunate that a very large amount of PSV work, particularly in the area of school contracts, was exempt from the EU Regulations. Things were not helped by the fact that operators usually had drivers who were switching quite legally between one sort of operation and record keeping and the other. Because of the weaknesses in the domestic journey record keeping it was often very difficult to see when such driving impinged on EU Regs and vice versa.

In short, the present system was a muddle, said Brigadier Turner, and he

was hardly surprised that the Vehicle Inspectorate found it so difficult to disentangle exactly what the company was doing. Having said that, the only real grounds for taking action were the five instances of failures to take daily rest admitted by the company. They had to be seen in the context of quite a large operation and the fact that the company had not previously appeared at public inquiry or had any convictions. Nor did it have any maintenance problems.

Brigadier Turner strongly recommended that the company now co-operate with the Vehicle Inspectorate to produce a system of record keeping which made it easier for checks to be carried out.

He pointed out that he had granted the licence on the understanding that the company would ensure rules on Drivers' Hours would be obeyed and proper records kept. If he ceased to be satisfied that was the case, and he stressed the word "ensure" was a strong one, he might have to look again at the whole basis of the company's licence.

The commissioner said he required the company to produce a detailed plan showing the activities it carried out and how those activities would be recorded, be it in tachograph records or other documents. That plan would be filed with the company's licence and he would expect it to follow it in future.



Michael Turner: domestic regs do not require any formal record

suspended after partner forged garage inspection records

the inspection records which were purported to be signed by an N Scotford, a partner in the garage business to which the maintenance was contracted. Mr Scotford subsequently denied signing the sheets.

Kenneth Hopley, the Vehicle

‘I think you have been lucky today’ - traffic commissioner Christopher Heaps

Inspectorate area manager, said there was no question that the firm's facilities were just not adequate. When he spoke to Mr Pratt about the records which did not bear *bona fide* signatures, he had admitted signing the records in the contractor's name and that he had done the inspections himself. He thought that in the order of 12 to 15 inspection records were

involved. Mr Pratt said he did not deny he had signed the records in somebody else's name.

They had been taking the vehicles to the garage but they were not being done. The only way he could keep the inspections within the required period was to do them himself. He had signed the records in the garage's name as it was the garage authorised to do the inspections. It had happened on numerous occasions. He had used workshop facilities in nearby premises. They now had their own workshop facilities and were employing their own mechanics, said Mr Pratt.

Maintaining there had been no intention to deceive, Mr Pratt said all the inspections had been carried out. Mr Ward said he had told Mr Pratt that his surname denoted what he had done. Indicating that everything he had said to the deputy commissioner that he would do on the last occasion had been done, Mr Pratt said the firm's vehicles had been stopped on numerous occasions since the last

public inquiry without any problems. Though he had acted stupidly, public safety had never been put in jeopardy.

Mr Heaps said the false signature must throw doubt on the whole accuracy of the forms. It could clearly be perceived as an attempt to deceive the VI.

Transport manager Robert Lane said the vehicle given the prohibition during the fleet inspection had been inspected by the commercial garage that morning. The garage had failed to supply records for a number of inspections and, when he had requested them, he had been told that, if he gave the garage the registration numbers and mileages of the vehicles concerned, it would supply them.

Mr Ward said that, though the firm had experienced difficulty with its maintenance contractor, it was clear the vehicles had reached a very high standard. Suspending the licence with effect from the end of the current school term, Mr Heaps said that completing maintenance records in someone else's name was completely unac-

ceptable and forgery was not too strong a word for what Mr Pratt had done.

He had been told ironically that Mr Pratt had done it in the interest of public safety because the commercial garage were not doing the work either on time or well. He was prepared to accept what Mr Pratt had done was not intended to deceive in any way so as to endanger public safety, said the commissioner.

Nevertheless, Mr Pratt did mislead the VI by signing the papers in someone else's name. However, he accepted the maintenance of the vehicles had been carried out. He therefore found that Mr Pratt's reputation was not irreparably damaged but it had been a close-run thing. I

Saying the suspension demonstrated how seriously he was treating Mr Pratt's actions, Mr Heaps urged the firm to avoid another public inquiry. "I think you have been lucky today," he told Mr Pratt, "as I would have been entitled to find that your reputation was destroyed."

Surely this job can only be done with a PSV O-licence

Q A public house near here advertises free minibus transport from home to pub and back for clients having a meal. The vehicle used is a 16-seat crewbus, which is not built to PSV standards and is not operated under a PSV O-licence. Surely this use is hire and reward which can only legally be done within the operator licensing system?

RS, Nottinghamshire

A If a vehicle with more than eight seats (and in some circumstances, smaller vehicles too) carries passengers 'for hire and reward' it does indeed have to be operated within the PSV O-licence system using a public service vehicle. This is made plain by Section 1(1) of the Public Passenger Vehicle Act 1981.

Section 1(5) defines the meaning of hire and reward. In addition to the obvious meaning, it does also include a payment: "made in consideration of other matters in addition to the journey and irrespective of the person by or to whom [the payment] is made."

That alone would seem to leave little doubt that ostensibly free transport linked with partaking a meal at a pub or restaurant is indeed 'hire and reward'. This was put to the test in 1992 in the case of *Rout v. Swallow Hotels Ltd.* Here the hotel provided courtesy bus transport for hotel occupants. The appeal judges of the Queens Bench Division had no hesitation in deciding that, although no payments were made that directly gave a right to travel, the fact that the coaches were provided as part of the hotel facilities, made the operation clearly one of hire and reward.

It is quite possible that the owner or manager of the pub concerned is providing this service for the best possible motives and in genuine ignorance of the law. A quiet word might, therefore, be efficacious, but that might be difficult as you do, of course, have a commercial interest in seeing this abstraction of work from the industry stopped - not to mention the proclivity of landlords to have big, fierce dogs. The alternative would be to send the evidence (ie, a copy of the offending advert and make and registration number of the vehicle) to the Traffic Area Office.

What would be position with Drivers' Hours rules?

Q Our company owns a number of special needs schools and operates several 14 and 53-seater coaches under a PSV O-licence. The vehicles are driven by full-time PCV drivers and are used solely to transport staff and pupils to, from and between schools. We have recently employed a person on our care staff who holds a PCV driver licence, but driving would not be his main job. When he does some driving, how would we stand with Drivers' Hours? I assume that the domestic rules would apply. Journeys during the week would be within a 10-mile radius and at weekends within 50 miles.

AH, Derby

The domestic rules apply to vehicles with no more than 16 passenger seats, irrespective of distance travelled on journeys wholly within the UK, and to larger vehicles when used on regular journeys with a route length not exceeding 50 km - roughly 31

marksman



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Questions on coach and bus operation should be sent to: Marksman, c/o Coach and Bus Week, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS or fax 01733 467154 Marksman will answer more questions on 18 December 1997

miles. Consequently, some of your longer journeys at weekends, when done with larger vehicles, would have to comply with the EU driving hours and tachograph rules. All of the foregoing applies whoever is driving the vehicles.

I turn now to that part of your question about a person who is not employed as a driver, but who may, nevertheless, do some driving. The UK 'domestic' rules are fairly relaxed about the degree to which non-driving work counts against daily and weekly limits.

More to the point, if on domestic rules a driver does not drive for more than four hours in total on any day in a week he is exempt from having to comply with the UK rules.

This alone may be sufficient to take your part-time driver right out of the system. Even if he should drive for more than four hours on no more than two days in any one week, he can still be free of the rules as long as all working duties on those days start and finish within a 24-hour period and there are 10 hours of consecutive rest before the first duty and after the last duty on those days. In these circumstances the driver does have to obey the domestic rules about continuous driving times, daily driving limits and have a maximum spread-over of 16 hours on the days in question.

If this part-time driver does do any work falling under the EU rules, he will have to comply with those rules in respect of all the work he does in a week, with driving under the domestic rules regarded as 'work' not as 'in scope' driving. All work will count towards daily and weekly working limits (and thus may cause problems with daily and weekly rest periods).

This is a very brief and factual answer to your question that does little more than outline which rules apply in any given circumstance. You will clearly need to research further the detail of the actual rules and the ramifications (like the fitment and use of tachographs and the completion and retention of tachograph records). I suggest that you should at least obtain a copy of the Department of Transport guide PSV 375 and get fully acquainted with its contents.

Are school children exempt from PSV Conduct regs?

Q Do the PSV Conduct Regulations for Drivers, Conductors and Passengers apply to school children, or are they exempt? Many education authority contracts forbid the expulsion of unruly pupils from school buses. MD, Worcs

A The so-called 'conduct' regulations (S.I. 1990 No. 1020) apply to all passengers without any exception and I certainly agree with the implied point of your question that it is not within the power of any local authority to make contractual rules that are contrary to the primary or secondary legislation made by Parliament. Notwithstanding that point of principle, I would urge you to be very cautious about using the authority given to the driver by Regulation 8(1) to remove passengers from the vehicle.

What this regulation actually says is: "Any passenger on a vehicle who contravenes any provision of these Regulations may be removed from the vehicle by the driver, inspector or conductor of the vehicle or, at the request of the driver, inspector or conductor, by a police constable."

Regulation 6 lists the things which a passenger must not do. It is too lengthy to recite it in full here, but sufficient to say that the list does not specifically cite unruly behaviour or even vandalism. Such conduct would only be contrary to the regulations: (a) if it put at risk, impeded or caused discomfort to other passengers or the driver; or (b) if the person concerned "had been causing a nuisance." It might be quite hard, should the need arise, to prove that the behaviour of a child fell within these categories.

My view has always been that eviction is the ultimate sanction which should only be used when all else has failed to control the situation - be it with rowdy adults or boisterous children. While a driver indisputably has the right to put off any passenger who contravenes the regulations, it should never be forgotten that the passenger would have a right to sue the driver and the operator for any loss or damages - including injury - resulting from such any action.

In the event of a legal action the court would, I think, make an assessment of the reasonableness of the action in the particular circumstances, taking account the alternative measures available to enable the journey to be completed. Whether a child who has given rise to such a level of concern should be allowed to board at all in future is, of course, a matter that can, and should, be thrashed out with parents, school or education authority at the earliest opportunity.

Consequently my instruction to drivers has always been: "You have this power, but you should never have to use it - especially in relation to school children."

FREE HELP

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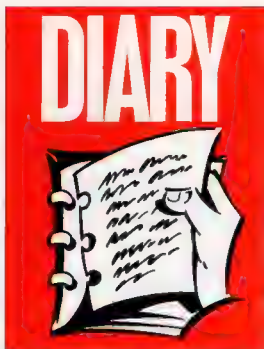
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COACH AND BUS WEEK ENDING...

10 YEARS AGO

● NBC splits its Ambassador coach operation in Norwich and sells it to two buyers. Eastern Counties gets the Vulcan Road depot and the coach operation itself goes to a management buyout. Joint mds at the 40-vehicle Ambassador are Ray Green and Terry Park. Eastern Counties - also sold to management - has been waiting for the new premises following a property deal to sell Surrey Street to Norwich Union. ● CAMBUS Holdings buys Premier Travel Services from Premier Travel Group, which intends to concentrate on travel agencies and air travel. PTG looks set to be taken over by Renford Sargent and Peter Andrews.

15 YEARS AGO

● THE Bus and Coach Council campaigns at Westminster for the Government to provide a transport strategy so that the decline in bus passenger numbers can be halted. It presses for full fuel duty rebate for coach and bus sectors, and more dedicated road space. Dr Phillip Goodwin suggests cost-benefit analysis in transport planning, so that accident costs and other areas are taken into account. ● IN Coachmart's roundup of current ferry services, it reveals that 1983's prices include Townsend Thoresen's regime of £80 a coach plus single fares for each passenger - from £15 for Cherbourg and Le Havre, to £9 for Zeebrugge and Calais. P&O's Dover-Boulogne is priced at £80 per coach plus £9 single per adult.

Poster was not the ticket for our Glenda

NO LESS a person than Glenda Jackson MP, transport minister, has branded posters from Network Ticketing in Newcastle "sexist" and had them withdrawn.

The offending article was an advertisement to sell Student Traveltickets. Featuring a picture of a model wearing a strapless evening gown, the caption read: "I fancy something that's cheap, easy and goes all the way."

Now, while the writer of this week's Diary is staunchly pro-feminist - as long as his wife does the washing up - it does seem that the allusion is spot on for the generation which is obsessed with sex. Indeed, the advert got the go-ahead of the Advertising Standards Authority, says Go-Ahead md Paul Matthews, also chairman of Network Ticketing.

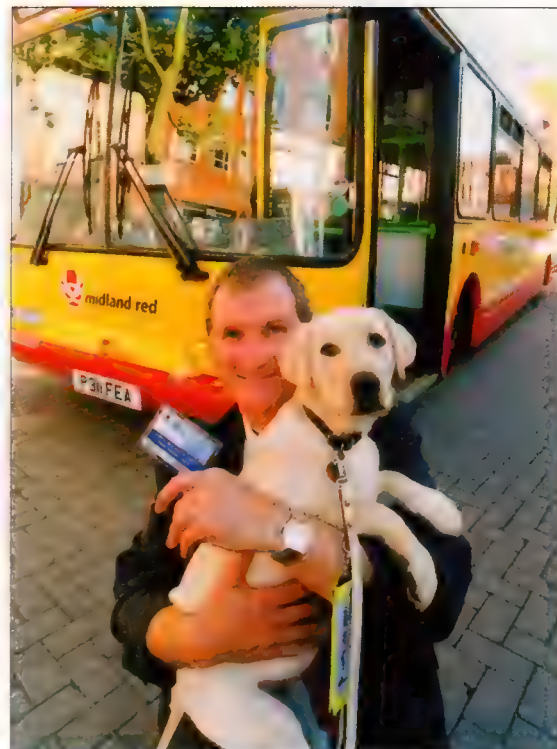
Not only that, but the local rag, the *Evening Chronicle*, reports that the part-time receptionist who

posed for the extremely unrevealing picture thought the campaign was a harmless bit of fun: "I thought it was a very good concept, and just the sort of thing which would appeal to young people," said model Kelly Watson. And she should know. She's 17 years old.

We should also remember that on Ms Jackson's impressive CV are several films in which she bared all, including the scenes in DH Lawrence's *Women in Love*, co-starring well-known feminist Ollie Reed.

Her answer would, of course, be that SHE did it for art's sake.

Meanwhile, in neighbouring Teesside, Stagecoach - a company which famously produced tough businesswoman of the year, Ann Gloag - is advertising its own Megarider tickets with the slogan "Once a week is enough for anyone." Oooh er, missus...



Dog day afternoon

ALL say "Ahhhhhh." Another heartwarming picture of a warm, cuddly creature. And that's just the driver.

National Guide Dog Week got a small boost from Midland Red North when it announced that not only guide dogs can board the MRN and Stevensons buses for free, but so can puppy trainers for the association.

We all know of the vital role of guide dogs in using their sight to steer their owners around things that may harm them. But we wonder whether trained 'hearing' dogs can steer their owners away from Spice Girls records?

Not quite walking on the water, but...

WHO among us would celebrate a near-miss coach accident by singing a few verses of our favourite hymn?

Not many, for sure, but a party of born-again Christians on a coach which crossed the central reservation of the motorway and hit the bank of the opposite carriageway did exactly that:

"We started to praise God, and stood on the embankment singing," says one of the passengers.

"We were grateful that we crossed three lanes of heavy traffic without hitting a heavy goods vehicle and not overturning."

A more practical approach to road

safety would have been to wear seatbelts which, though fitted to this coach, were not being worn, admitted the passenger.

The police later claimed that the presence of the seatbelts had prevented serious injury. Praise be. They did it without even being buckled up.

BYGONE DAYS

The last word in colour

THE LAST WORD in colour pictures of buses are a big feature of Reg Wilson's *Municipal Buses in Colour*, published just in time for Christmas.

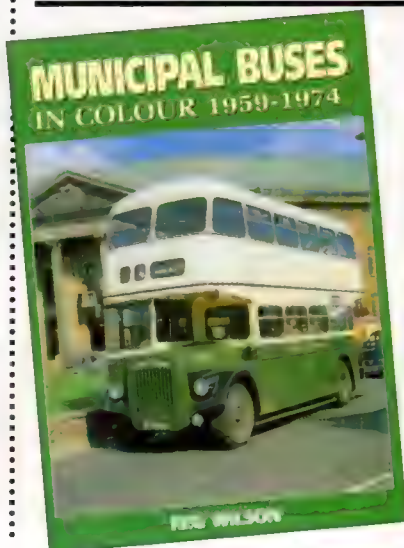
In the late Fifties and early Sixties, when Reg wielded his camera for most of the historic shots in this book, colour film technology was in relative infancy. Linda Macartney (nee Eastman) had just been born, and her dad's company had just come up with Kodachrome 25 slide film - the finest transparency film ever made, and still going strong.

Unfortunately, this 'slow' film needed long exposures to record anything, so action shots were not easy. Nonetheless,

Reg Wilson's decision to use it paid off; the pictures are excellent.

I'll be castigated for saying so, but it's a shame the subject material didn't always justify the effort; the municipals were never noted for cutting a dash in the paintwork department, so the reader is faced with an endless number of greens, reds and blues, and only the minutiae to relieve the monotony.

For those of an historic bent, however, this 128-page volume answers most of the questions about council-owned bus companies... and committee-designed liveries. Published by Ian Allan at £19.99.



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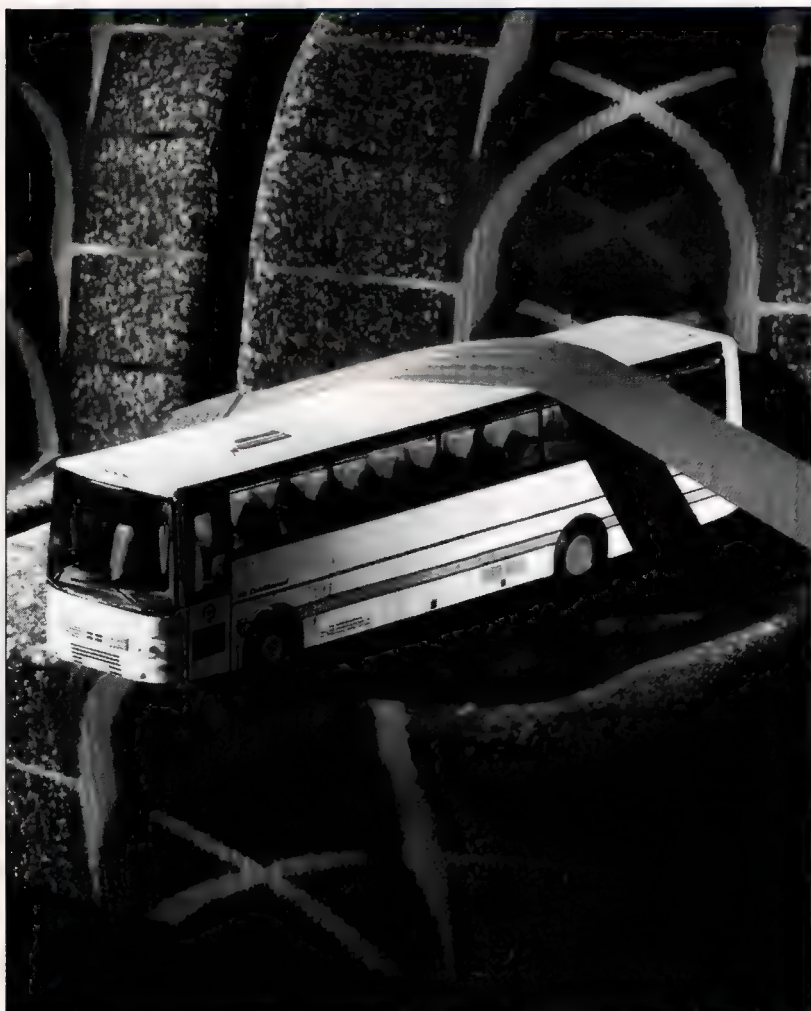
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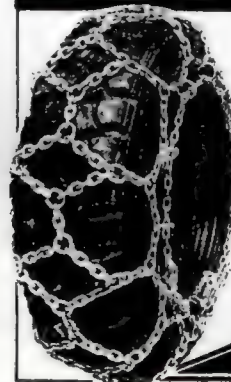


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor, *Coach and Bus Week*, EMAP Automotive Ltd, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS
fax: 01733 467154 e-mail: FrankF@automotive.emap.co.uk

Bring back the conductor

I WRITE TO ENDORSE Michael Russell's assertion there is still a large place in urban areas for the crew-operated bus, and that it is, in fact, preferred by many passengers (CBW, 30 October)

Mr Russell's reference to the many who never set foot on a bus is very relevant. The crew-operated bus is perceived as a user-friendly transport service, whereas the OPO bus is a passenger production line, where we are expected to get on quickly, have our money ready (the correct money that is, - no change given), and then know - even in a strange town - where to get off (don't even think of talking to the driver while the vehicle is in motion). All very intimidating for the first timer or occasional user.

Having successfully boarded the bus, however, why is it that none of the regulars - those women who go shopping by bus three times a week - is smitten with the same sense of urgency? Well of course, because it is completely impossible to manipulate four bulging carrier bags, unstrap the toddler from the buggy, fold up the buggy, load everything on board and still have the (correct) money ready. Do you remember how in some towns conductors used to alight and fold push-chairs up for harassed mums?

Moreover, in the Sixties most urban buses were front engine, back-loading double deckers with a seating capacity of around 56-64. Wheels at the extreme front provided a reasonably smooth and balanced ride.

However, such vehicles were virtually impossible to operate without a conductor so they were replaced by monstrous 77 to 88-seater rear-engine deckers, with the front wheels set well back, soggy suspension and a snatchy semi-automatic gearbox, which combined to give a wild, swooping, lurching ride at anything over 10 mph. They were the biggest turn-off to bus travel ever invented - accountants' buses.

Furthermore, because of the increased carrying capacity at a time when people were already abandoning bus travel, service intervals were extended. And our

Letter of the Week

Stop this belts Bill becoming law

THE FOLLOWING LETTER has been sent to Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott:

I run a small coach business of six vehicles ranging from 18 to 53-seater vehicles.

I would like you to know what a headache seatbelts are in vehicles conveying school children. I am very concerned about retrofitting belts into vehicles not designed to have them fitted. Carmarthenshire County Council has insisted on belts in all vehicles carrying school children. The belts and their mechanism protrude to such an extent that they get knocked by bags and children's feet every time the children get in and out of the seat. The children do not wear the belts, they play with them, tie them in knots, tie them together and tie them across the aisle and jump up and down on them like a trampoline. Surely this is a ridiculous situation?

To fit seatbelts to a seat that is not designed for them is a nightmare. On many of the seat squabs, there is no room for the fittings. The squab has to be rammed into position, tearing the moquette which we have paid hundreds of pounds for, to refurbish the vehicle. The children refuse to wear the belts because they say they are dangerous and uncomfortable.

Also, we are being forced to fit belts before we have been told how the belt should be installed and before sufficient testing has been carried out. What will be the MOT requirement? Will our vehicle fail an MOT

if the belt is not working properly or improperly fitted? What is the law about minibuses? I understood a seat with a tubular frame should not have a belt fitted. The council is forcing us to fit belts even to service bus vehicles. The only minibus that belts can be properly fitted to are the integral-bodied ones which have belts fitted at the factory. A vehicle that has belts fixed to a seat with tubular frames is going to be a death trap.

Why is the coach industry being subjected to this legislation when our record on safety is so good? The M42 minibus accident was nothing to do with PSV drivers and vehicles.

What we need in this country is purpose-built vehicles to carry school children as safely as possible without belts. I enclose an article from Canada. The Canadian Ministry of Transport does not believe in belts. In fact, it feels injuries will be worse with belts. I have first-hand information because my brother works for Transport Canada in accident investigation.

Who is going to foot the bill for replacing all these belts the children vandalise? Our council is not covering the cost of belts, let alone replacements. I say stop this Bill before it becomes law. Not enough thought and testing has been done. It's one thing to make a law but another to make it workable.

ML MEYERS
Meyers Coaches
Carmarthen

intelligence was insulted with the fatuous claim that OPO buses were no slower than crew operated - provided we all had our money ready (the correct money, of course - no change given).

To get drivers out of their cars we need to create car-like conditions - with frequent, conductor-operated, properly-designed buses.

STEPHEN FORD
Billinghay
Lincoln

was no evidence of corruption, the transaction was not deliberately hidden and there was no loss to any one.

It seems, however, that the Serious Fraud Office (the Government in other words) could not comprehend someone giving away £1,000,000 unless there was an ulterior motive, even though, to a wealthy man, £1,000,000 is perhaps no different to £100 or £1,000 to others.

The Formula 1 Story:

At approximately the same time Mr B Ecclestone gave the Labour Party (the Government in other words) £1,000,000. The Labour Party said thank you, what a generous man. After all £1,000,000 seems a huge amount to most people, but to a wealthy man it is perhaps no different to £100 or £1,000 to others.

The stories are remarkably similar except that, in the Formula 1 case, the recipient said: "Thank you, Thank you," to the donor. In the bus case the donor and the recipient were imprisoned - by the recipient in the Formula 1 case.

This seems very questionable jus-

tice. Perhaps Mr Williams should have covered the British Bus fleet with cigarette advertising.

It is also a salutary warning to others: "Giving a gift to say thank you can be injurious to your freedom" unless the gift is to the Labour Party.

CHRIS CLARKE
Chief executive
East Lancs
Blackburn
Lancs

Giving 'gifts' is dangerous

The Bus Story:

On 5 September 1997 Dawson Williams, the once chairman of British Bus, was imprisoned for two years and banned from being a company director for four years. The reason for this was, he gave £1,000,000 of his own money to somebody who had supported him in the past.

He was tried and convicted of "suspicion of corruption". There

Letter of the Week wins a
Corgi Classics model bus



CORGI
CLASSICS

CBW Classified 22 pages this week **DON'T** miss out on the deals

Neoplan's grand plans

With its home market in slight recession, Neoplan now sells more vehicles abroad than in Germany, and is booming. Bill Godwin reports

NEOPLAN should this year see an increase in production of 17% over 1996 to a total of around 1,500 vehicles. This performance is largely due to the demand by Neoplan's export customers, notably in Poland, France, Sweden and Italy, said the company at an open day held for visiting journalists. With the home market in slight recession, Neoplan now sells more vehicles abroad than in Germany. Turnover for the period under review is expected to exceed Dm800 million.

Of the maker's new 'top-of-the-range' Starliner, first introduced in September 1996, 65 units have already been supplied and this should rise to 87 by the end of December.

In a 20-vehicle display during Neoplan's own exhibition at the Stuttgart plant - supported by the stands of over 30 engine and component suppliers - the new three-axle 'Starliner' built to a length of

13.7 metres in the colours of major Turkish tours and intercity operator, Ulusoy, underlined Neoplan's success with this new luxury coach in export markets. Ulusoy is a long-standing Neoplan customer and user of the 15 metre coach - the long, four-axle, 'Megalin' double-deck coach - and will now take a total of 12 Starliners.

The same model could also be seen in various stages of completion in the new 'Teamline' hall. Since its inauguration earlier this year, the hall must rate as one of Europe's best coach production sites which, thanks to its spaciousness, approaches an almost ideal working environment. The 'Teamline' finishing shop is part of the massive investment into the "NEO" (Neoplan Efficiency Optimisation) philosophy practised at Stuttgart.

Other vehicles going through the plant last week included one of a number of low-height 'Skyliners' for a Japanese tour operator (taking the total of



Ulusoy of Turkey is taking 12 Neoplan 13.7-metre

Neoplan units in that country to over 400) and featuring an unusual 1+1+1 seating configuration.

A French sightseeing specialist is taking delivery soon of Neoplan double deckers with what can only



Neoplan's new 25-seater CNG-fuelled hybrid-drive midibus is based on the 8.02-metre 'Carbonliner'

Latest

LATEST addition to the growing number of hybrid-drive buses in trial operation on the Continent is an 8.08-metre long Neoplan MIC 8002 GES 25-passenger vehicle with tandem electric motor drive supplied from a 14-module VARTA nickel-metal-hydrate battery pack.

In 'pure' electric mode this gives an operating range from 25 to 40 km dependent on service load and route factors. Battery power is only used in the "environmentally-sensitive" spa precinct of the Bad Füssing system which is funded by the Bavarian Government under an on-going development project. This has already notched up valuable experience with battery-electric buses using (very costly) 'rapid exchange' power packs in conjunction with specially-designed transfer stations.

Using the BMW-driven generator in the new bus helps to increase range almost infinitely subject to recharging the roof-mounted CNG tanks. The petrol/CNG spark ignition engine - believed to be the smallest ever used



tri-axle Starliners (left) for its extensive network of intercity services. The other vehicle in the 'Team Line' finishing shop is for a French operator

be described as all-round glazing extending, on the top deck, to floor level revealing the steel frame structure. Other plans in the innovative Neoplan 'pipeline' include work on an articulated trolleybus

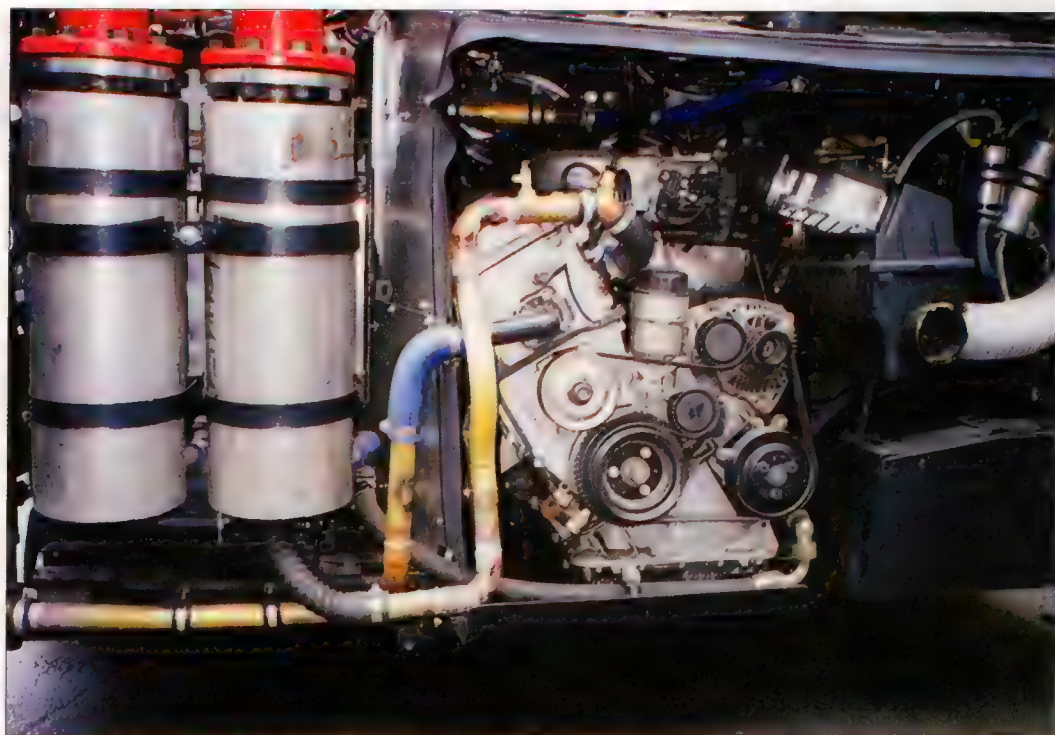
concept for the Swiss city of Lausanne which possesses a 'network topography' demanding that for 'off-wire' operation a 500 bhp (!) diesel gen-set is part of the specification. A delay in the delivery of

the Italian-made fuel cell has now put back presentation of Neoplan's contribution to the alternative fuel sector (see also CBW, 9 October) until the Summer of 1998.

hybrid

in a bus of this weight (10,600 kg gvw) - is started on petrol and switched automatically to run on CNG. Power from the generator drives the traction motors and/or feeds the battery pack.

This is controlled by a sophisticated 'management system' forming part of the installation which optimises the various fuel/driving options. This includes a cab-mounted monitor to provide a number of menus to display the selected functions. The 74 kW engine is fitted with a CNG-adjusted catalytic converter to achieve Californian ULEV (ultra-low-emission-vehicle) values due for implementation in the year 2000. An entirely new feature of the Neoplan prototype is the introduction of a 'thermo pack' in the coolant circuit (the electric traction motors are also water-cooled) which doubles as an 'immersion heater' in which rheostatic resistances accept regenerative braking current when the state-of-charge of the battery precludes 'topping up'. The hot water from this installation can be used to heat the bus in Winter.



In its first use of a BMW 1.8-litre car-type engine Neoplan has adapted it for dual-fuel operation



Testing time: with up to 126 passengers on board, reliability of the 12-metre long, 305bhp tri-axle super lowfloor Dennis Trident is critical

A lifetime in 18 weeks

ONE OF the world's largest rigid-body buses is undergoing durability trials at Millbrook Proving Ground. The pre-production Dennis Trident will drive thousands of miles through some of the most aggressive city conditions - all in just 18 weeks.

The 12-metre long, 305bhp Trident, which is thought to be the world's first three-axle, super-lowfloor double decker, was developed specifically for the demanding operating conditions of Hong Kong. So far, orders for a total of 248 Tridents have been won including business from both major Hong Kong operators, KMB and Citybus.

The only way to ensure the new Dennis Trident will prove reliable is to test it under realistic operating conditions

The Hong Kong routes impose a wide range of arduous operating conditions, including long hills and high-speed transfer to the new Chek Lap Kok airport. With up to 126 passengers on board (twice the capacity of a typical London double-decker), reliability is critical.

"The only way to ensure that the new Trident

will prove reliable is to test it under realistic operating conditions," said Paul Govier, commercial manager with Dennis Specialist Vehicles. "At Millbrook, we can simulate the toughest likely operating cycle for any world market and compress an entire operating lifetime into a few months."

The specially-developed test procedure involves 24-hour driving over a mix of routes and road surfaces. High-speed operation is conducted on the circular high-speed bowl, tight city routes are used to stress steering components and long hills test transmissions and cooling systems. The road surfaces include pave, pot-holes, speed ramps and other features to test structural integrity and component durability. Regular 'stops' include kneeling and opening the passenger doors, all under tightly-controlled conditions.

Throughout the tests, the bus is fully laden (simulating 126 passengers) and has the air-conditioning switched on. Instrumentation on the bus monitors temperatures, pressures and strains, helping to reveal the stresses placed on it during an entire operational lifespan.

Individual components are also being tested in Millbrook's laboratories. A suspension tower, for example, was subjected to loads up to 35kN - far in excess of those likely to be found during service. Even under this extreme load, it just deformed a little and continued to operate safely.

"Millbrook is a highly-experienced commercial vehicle test centre," concludes Mr Govier. "We can conduct an entire, integrated test programme there and be confident that it is truly representative of real-life operating conditions."

Millbrook Proving Ground is able to provide virtually every test and validation service necessary for the development and homologation of cars, components and commercial vehicles for sale in any world market.

Its global reputation for confidentiality, competitiveness and quality of service has attracted projects from over 450 companies, with customers coming from 23 countries and a wide range of transport industries.



Millbrook can simulate toughest conditions and compress an operating lifetime into months



Celebration of Excellence



COACH AND BUS WEEK

COACH INDUSTRY AWARDS

1998

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE COACH TOURISM COUNCIL

Friday 23rd January
1998

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AUTOBUS

It's **THE** industry event of the year - where Coach Operators, Manufacturers and Suppliers get together to celebrate the best our industry has to offer. This year the awards will be held at the Stakis Birmingham Metropole Hotel. A drinks reception, dinner, star cabaret and dancing into the small hours will create a night to remember. Meet old friends, make new ones and support all that is best in our industry - but most of all, enjoy yourself!



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TABLE BOOKING FORM Coach Industry Awards, Stakis Birmingham Metropole Hotel, Friday 23rd January 1998

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Special Hotel rates are available for everyone wishing to stay overnight at the Stakis Birmingham Metropole. B+B for a single room is £47 + VAT and twin £58 + VAT. When booking your accommodation state you are attending the Coach industry awards. Stakis reservation number 0121 780 4242.



Universitybus: unique in UK



WRIGHTS

AS STUDENT NUMBERS at the University of Hertfordshire have spiralled upwards by 250% in the last five years so has demand for bus services to its different campus sites, boosting the fleet of the University's own bus company from five to 35.

Tim Wilson, chairman of Universitybus and the University's pro vice chancellor, claims the company, Universitybus, is unique in the UK but he predicts that it won't be the last.

University bus companies are fairly common in the USA, says Mr Wilson and, with changes in rules for student grants scheduled for next year, it is expected there will be a massive upsurge in the number of students living at home.

Consequently a nationwide trend will follow in its wake which will increase demand for home to university travel and, with car parking already a major problem on most campus sites, alternative bus services become an attractive proposition. Mr Wilson said a number of other universities had visited Hertfordshire to see the Universitybus network in operation.

However, it's not only the concept of a university-owned commercial bus operation that could be copied elsewhere.

Among the regular services supplied by Universitybus is a park and ride for students and staff. This free facility is funded by ring-fenced charges for those who chose to park on-campus.

Meanwhile, the latest vehicle to join the operation is also a trend-setter. It is the first Dennis Dart SLF with Wrights Foline floor (above).

This ramped floor system was

launched earlier this year in Wright's 12-metre buses, eliminating the gallery effect towards the back of lowfloor buses and also adding strength to the vehicle's superstructure. The first Foline Crusader is a 10.8-metre 41-seater. It joins 15 Wright buses, 11 of them conventional lowfloor Crusader Darts with flat floor and two steps up the rear. Foline's 1.76 degree slope eliminates one of the steps (left).

Universitybus general manager, Michael Finn, said: "We were very keen to buy the Crusader Foline as soon as we knew it was going to become available. The floor layout extends the benefits of lowfloor operation to the full length of the bus, without the added expense and complexity of imported full lowfloor designs. We're confident that it will be a popular addition to our fleet and that it will help us attract even more of the Hertfordshire public on to our services."

Mr Finn's sentiments were echoed by Councillor Liz Rafferty, vice chair of Hertfordshire County Council's environmental group. She said that the county council had contributed £67,000 in grant over that last 18 months to help Universitybus fund its 12 lowfloor buses, and added: "These are buses that nobody has to apologise for travelling on anymore."

The remainder of the vehicle acquisition costs are funded by a commercial loan from the University itself.

While the operation is run principally for the convenience of students, it is strictly a commercial enterprise which covers its costs, and the services are proving increasingly popular with the general public.

AWARDS

Le Shuttle's first ever 'Operator Awards Evening'

Le Shuttle recognises the substantial support of the industry that has resulted in a record-breaking year.

GUESTS SWUNG to the seventies theme on 19 November on the occasion of Le Shuttle's first ever 'Operator Awards Evening'. Held at Kensington's Roof Gardens during World Travel Market the night was a thank you to the industry for their tremendous support.

This support has seen Le Shuttle establish its market leadership on the Folkestone to Calais (Coquelles) cross-Channel route with the coach market share rising to over 40% in

November '97. This growth is expected to be sustained in 1998 in-line with Le Shuttle's expansion of the day-trip and short-break market, developing exciting, new opportunities to travel to the continent.

Le Shuttle recognises the crucial role of operators, wholesalers and car promotion houses will play in realising these objectives and will continue to enhance its relationship with the industry ensuring the long term prosperity of the



The winners were, from top left clockwise:

Sean Taggart for Albatross (Best Coach Wholesaler), Paul Cowgill of Le Shuttle, Ian Henry for Leger (Best Coach Long Stay Operator), Simon Hibbs for Newmarket Promotions (Best Coach Holiday Company), Mark Hammerton for Eurocamp (Best Long Stay Car Tour Operator), Nick de Kerckhove for Crystal (Best Ski Operator), Alan Croft for Bridge Travel (Best Car Tour Short Break Operator), Tricia Walters of Le Shuttle, John Bridge for Supreme Holidays (Best Coach Day Trip Operator) and Alan Potts for Leisure Direction (Best Car Promotion House).

short-sea cross-Channel market.

Comments Paul Cowgill, Passenger Sales Director of Le Shuttle: "We decided to hold our 'Operator Awards' during World Travel Market to acknowledge and show our appreciation to the companies and individuals that support Le Shuttle.

When the team began discussing the awards and appropriate categories two distinct areas emerged, the more serious and the more lighthearted - which we retained in the presentations on the 19th following reception drinks and dinner.

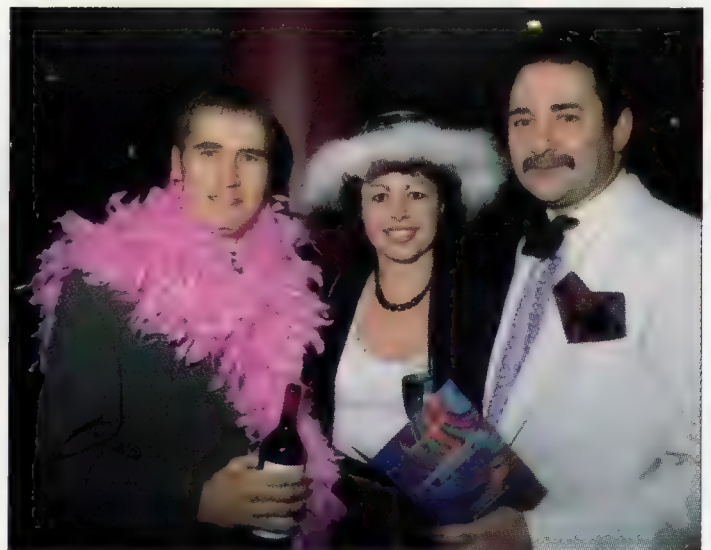
In most cases the choice of winner was tremendously difficult

to make, with strongly contested nominations, but each award shares a single characteristic - exceptional loyalty and commitment to Le Shuttle."

Winners were selected, from three nominated contenders in each category, by the key account managers and the reservations staff.



Caroline Parker of Le Shuttle with Jason Stone and Nathalie Williams of Disneyland® Paris



Kevin Baum (Botel), Joanna Ammes (En Route) and Paul Cowgill of Le Shuttle

and the winners are...

AWARDS



Tricia Walters, John Bridge of Supreme Holidays and Paul Cowgill

Best Coach Day
Trip Operator

Winner
**Supreme
Holidays**



Best Car Tour Short
Break Operator

Winner **Bridge Travel**
Alan Croft



Best Coach
Long Stay Operator

Winner
Leger

Sean Taggart

Best Coach Wh
Winner **Albatros**

Sean Taggart



Best Car
Promotion House
Winner
Leisure Direction
Alan Potts



Ski Operator

tal
Kerckhove

Best Coach
Group Operator
Winner
**Newmarket
Promotions**
Simon Hibbs



lesaler

Best Longstay
Car Tour Operator
Winner **Eurocamp**
Mark Hammerton



 **AWARDS**

And then for something ... completely different

FRANK CARSON, King of 70's comedy entertained guests with his cabaret performance, following dinner, and set the tone for the more lighthearted awards that were to follow.

The industry is renowned for some colourful characters many of whom Le Shuttle recognised on Wednesday night with the 'Operator Awards' presented by Frank, Tricia and Paul.



Paul Cowgill, Frank Carson and friends from Crystal

Other Award Winners

Fantasy Golf Handicap Award

Winner **Peter Welch**



Too Smooth to Move Award

Winners **Frank Harris and Des Moyland**



Most Entertaining Negotiator Award

Winner **Vanessa Broster**



Most Argumentative Negotiator Award

Winner **Steve Moore**



School coach with a difference

KIRKBY

A SCHOOL COACH with a difference is now in operation at Newmachar Coaches outside Aberdeen. It's the first Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz 0814D Vario in Scotland - and it is fitted with a TV and video to keep the children amused on the way to and from the classroom.

"We are mainly using the coach on a contract to carry handicapped children to school," said Davy Reid of Newmachar Coaches, "and we find that playing a video on the run to and from school helps make the journey more pleasant. Teachers find a benefit too, saying that the pupils are more relaxed when they arrive at the school."

Newmachar Coaches has been in business since 1974 and runs seven coaches. The new 33-seat Plaxton Beaver, supplied by Kirkby Coach & Bus, has replaced a three-year-old 709D. The fitment of TV/video also gives the company a useful plus-point when it comes to using the coach on private hire.



"The 0814D has much-improved ride and performance with its rear air suspension and higher power rat-

ing. Its performance on the road is really impressive," said Mr Reid.

A coach builder by trade, Mr Reid

ordered the Beaver after a visit to Plaxton's production lines to see bodies in build.



Director and general manager of Go Wear Buses Martin Harris (left) with City of Sunderland client services manager Peter Atkinson

Lowfloors for 'Super Route'

OPTARE

GO WEAR BUSES is investing £819,000 in nine new lowfloor vehicles to operate on the proposed 'Super Route' along Durham Road in Sunderland.

Introduction of the vehicles, which will be operating on the 220 and 222 Sunderland and Durham

service, is the first step in a number of 'Super Route' proposals. Other partners in the scheme include Sunderland Council, Nexus and Stagecoach Busways.

The nine new vehicles from Optare are the first stage in the Go Ahead Group subsidiary's planned investment in 26 new vehicles over the next 12 months.

Crosville: Axxess-ultralows

WRIGHTS

CROSVILLE, the Chester-based division of FirstBus - soon to be FirstGroup - subsidiary PMT, has replaced double deckers with lowfloor Wright/Scania Axxess-ultralow single decks on a park-and-ride service from Upton to the centre of the historic city.

Three of the 12-metre 40-seat lowfloors are painted in a dedicated red, white and blue livery for the Chester City Council funded service.

The new buses are helping to open up park and ride to more disabled people and to shoppers with trolleys, buggies and heavy shopping loads.

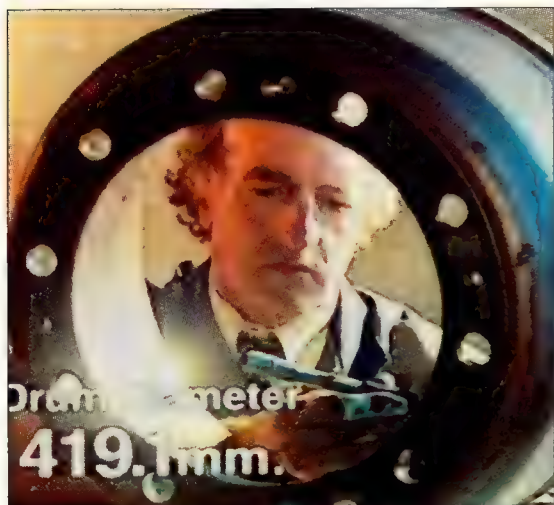
They have kneeling suspension, wheelchair ramps, priority seating

and the new standard FirstBus interior. "Park and ride services are at the sharp end of the bus industry's drive to encourage more motorists to use public transport," said Pat Reeson, Crosville's Chester manager.

"In four years we have built up the Upton park-and-ride route from two midibuses and we're confident that the introduction of stylish, state-of-the-art lowfloor buses will allow us to develop it even further into a service that Chester's shoppers and commuters will be pleased to use instead of taking their cars into the city centre."

As part of FirstBus's fleet renewal programme, Crosville plans to put another 11 Wright-bodied Scania lowfloors into service next Summer on a route in Birkenhead.





Measuring the brake drum diameter - part of profiling

New perspectives for coach and bus fitters

COMPULSIVE viewing for all coach and bus fitters should be Don's video on profiling brake drums.

The 10-minute film takes the engineer through the process of profiling, which not only helps improve braking efficiency but reduces judder, noise, and extends tyre life.

"Profiling maximises the efficiency of a brake system by matching the outer radius profile of the lining to the inner radius of the drum braking path," said senior technical engineer John Brightmore.

■ The video costs £12.99 a copy direct from Don on 0161 205 2371.

Firm seeing sea change in its sales pattern

Stagecoach backs Hanover's displays

By Mark Williams

HANOVER DISPLAYS has got the approval of bus group Stagecoach in the battle for the blinds.

The Lewes-based business which manufactures passenger displays from flip-dot to LED already sells its products into FirstBus, Cowie and Go-Ahead companies, and says its flip-dot displays are gaining ground in this competitive market.

"Unlike other, superficially similar, systems Hanover's flip-dot displays are fully electronic - the dots magnetically powered so there are no moving parts to drive the display," says Hanover md Gavin Williams.

Fully sealed into a metal

casing, the displays do not need to be cleaned. Hanover reports that even displays installed 10 years ago are still working trouble-free.

One of the strengths of Hanover's displays is the development of new sign controllers, which allows downloading of new routes and destinations through a standard RS232 computer port. With one megabyte of information storage, the system has more than enough memory for even complex routes.

Hanover is now witnessing a sea change in its sales pattern. While 1996 saw 90% of product exported, the UK's current focus on improving passenger systems has shown phenom-

nal sales growth at home.

Abroad, Hanover's successes have also continued, with an LED-based 'next stop' sign sold to Brussels operator STIB, which runs more than 500 vehicles. It is a similar system adopted by Stagecoach Devon, which used the interior display aboard its Park and Ride in Exeter, and can be adapted so that advertising messages are triggered at specific points along the bus's route. Hanover even has a digital voice synthesiser which can produce audio support.

■ For full details, contact Gavin or Andrew Williams, or Alan Cressey, on 01273 477528, fax 01273 483186, e-mail hanover@hanoverdisplays.com

RM parts

THE long-lasting RM has suffered in recent years from lack of spares... and none more rare than the saloon window rubbers.

The dearth in this precious commodity has led the Routemaster Operators and Owners Association to contact a rubber manufacturer direct, and to have the moulding reproduced.

"Standard RMs utilise up to 65 metres of this rubber per vehicle," says secretary Graham Lunn. "It is now available from the RMOOA for £2.35 a metre plus delivery, though RMOOA members are entitled to a substantial discount."

RMOOA also has stocks of other Routemaster spares, including exterior fixing panel screws, bonnet roundels, triangular radiator grille emblems and a selection of authentic transfers.

■ Contact RMOOA at 31 Pooley Avenue, Egham, Surrey TW20 8AB, tel 01784 437849.

Visit museum for some Christmas gifts

A VISIT to the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden could solve Christmas present problems for those whose nearest and dearest are also nuts about buses.

Among an array of stylish gifts branded with the LT logo are chromed cigar lighters (£6.99), cigarette cases (£8.99) and a nifty portable ashtray

(£4.99). Tipplers have a choice of shot glasses (£1.99) and aperitif glasses (£3.99) while cocoa sippers can choose from a range of London Transport-inspired mugs.

Tee-shirts, Tube Map socks, books and gift sets offer still more variety, while the real London Transport aficionado's family will possibly appreci-

ate a £19.95 LT Museum season ticket which includes children's membership of the Wheelie Club.

Wives with less interest in public transport can go along for the ride safe in the knowledge that Covent Garden's shopping is to die for.

■ London Transport Museum is at the centre of Covent Garden.

Orchid, the flower of positioning systems?

THE combination of digital telephone technology and the Global Positioning Satellite system has resulted in Orchid - a 'telematics' system devised by European Telecom and electronics giant Racal.

Orchid uses a sophisticated and extra-accurate version of GPS to pinpoint vehicle position, and the convenience of GSM mobile phone technology to transfer the information.

The multi-faceted service includes navigation, on-line traffic information services and emergency assistance in

the same package. Unlike many systems, Orchid is voice-based and thus user-friendly.

The AA is to provide information services, including traffic monitoring and details of filling stations, banks and hotels should they be needed en route. The tariff starts at a low-user £17.50 per month rising to high talktime Orchid 500 at £100 a month.

■ For full details, contact 0181 974 1100, fax 0181 974 1133, or see the Website <http://www.global-telematics.com>



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reclining seats **£38,000**

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seats and courier **£25,000**

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1982 LEYLAND LEOPARD DUPLÉ,
53 seats. **£5,000**

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SUPREME V, 57 seats, tinted windows
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seater with toilet, wired for TV/video, PSV
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59 seats with belts plus standees, double
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excellent condition, ideal commuter service
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49 recliners, centre toilet, video etc, 1st registered November 1987, 1 only
£50,000 ono

VOLVO/PLAXTON 3500

Rear sunken toilet, video etc, 1st registered 4/88, 1 only
£50,000 ono

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1 'D' plate, 53 recliners,
£48,000 ono

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Fully fitted with seat belts, demountable toilet, full draw curtains, 49/55 seats, 12 months MoT, 1 owner from new, good condition

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July 1993

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46 seats, toilet, servery, overhead lockers. ZF S685 Manual Gearbox. ABS, 3-piece windscreen, destination. CHOICE OF 3

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22 seats with belts and driver

One owner from new, 130,000 genuine miles, electric door, new MoT, regularly maintained and inspected.

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★ 46 seats, toilet, servery, overhead lockers

★ ZF fully automatic gearbox, integral retarder, ABS, 3-piece windscreen, digital destination

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74214/CM

1994 L Reg DAF SB3000WS Caetano Algarve II. 49/53 rec and courier seat, centre Continental door, centre demountable toilet, fridge, hot and cold drinks, seatbelts, footrest, armrest, curtains, double glazed, entrance & gangway carpet, radio/tape/PA, 193k miles, new 1 year's MoT.

£115,000+VAT ono.

1993 K Reg DAF SB2700HS VAN HOOL. 51 rec + courier seat, centre Continental door, centre toilet, hot and cold drinks, seatbelts, footrest, armrest, curtains, double glazed, handrest covers, radio/tape/PA, 205k miles, 13 months MoT. **£110,000+VAT ono.**

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Plaxton Paramount 3200, 1984, 49 reclining seats, 12 months MoT, 6 new tyres fitted, good condition

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A reg Duple Laser Coach, 51 recliners, 6 months MoT, seat belts, semi-automatic gearbox.

In daily use

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51 recliner seats with toilet, H&C water, fridge, Telma, MoT May '98.

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Duple Dominant II, 53 seats, Express doors, MoT March 1998. Good mechanical condition.

£2,950 + VAT

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74161/CM

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All MoT'd

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53 seats, to be sold with 12 months test **£2,500 NO VAT**

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74 recliners, seat belts, toilet, double glazed, curtains, radio/video, drinks machine, new MoT, good condition **£51,250 plus VAT**

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DAF

BREAKING MB200 engine, gearbox and axles. Tel: 01873 855832, mobile 0973 218127. 73803/DAF

X REG Daf MB200 Supreme 5 GT. 53 reclining seats, MoT March 1998, tax end of January 1998, £10,950 + VAT. Gary Johnson, Cambridge. Tel: 01945 772477. 73982/DAF

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DAF NB230 PARAMOUNT 3500's

51 reclining seats with seat belts, rear sunken toilet, drinks machine, continental door, good condition.

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90PP test to Nov 98 £60,000

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From £44,000

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Real luxury at an unbeatable price

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Bova, full exec 49-53 seater, same price

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50 recliners, vgc,
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Plaxton 3200

Cummings L.10 Engine

Seat Belted

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SUPREME IV**

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three point seatbelts, manual
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9 metre, 26 seater, with extra seats,
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area, fridge, toilet, air conditioning, TV
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excellent condition and paintwork.

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MAN

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25-33 seats, Allison gearbox,
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Beautiful condition inside
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16 seater, fitted 3 point belts,
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power door, underfloor luggage
space

£22,000

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December, 1998. Carlyle body, good con-
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1988 (PP) Iveco 49.10 TurboDaily Robin Hood City Nippy 25-seat coach, manual gearbox, luggage boot, full soft trim interior, radio/cassette and speakers, full refurbishment includes retrim in your choice of moquette, newly converted high speed back axle and twin interior luggage racks, one only at just £7,995 including finishing in your livery. **ORDER NOW FOR DELIVERY THIS MONTH**

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1987 D MCW MetroRider 23/5-seat buses, Perkins engine, choice, £5,995

1987 D MCW MetroRider 23/5-seat bus, Cummins engine, £6,495

1986 C Mercedes 608D/Reeve Burgess 20-seat bus, £5,495

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- ★ Delivery service using our own specially designed bus transporter

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(safety check only included, full preparation often available at extra cost if required)

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1987 E Optare City Pacer 21/25 seat buses, just two owners from new, manual gearboxes, recent engine reconditions, yellow/black exteriors, outstanding appearance, MoT's 6/98 and 8/98, choice of two of these attractive vehicles at just £2,995 each

1983 A Mercedes 608D SMS 21-seat service bus, power door, MoT April, one only, £2,295

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1985/6 (B and C) Ford Transit 20-seat buses, Carlyle Mark I bodywork, red exteriors, very rare vehicles, MoT's 2/98 and 3/98, beige/orange interiors, power doors, ticket machine fittings. Just three now left. Excellent drive-away value at just £1,595 each. Ideal spare or contract buses - 20 seat Transits are very rare so buy them while we've got some!



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USED

1996 (N) MERCEDES 814 PLAXTON BEAVER, coach spec, 33 seats.

1994 (L) FORD TRANSIT, 15 seat + driver. Non PSV.

1991 (H) MERCEDES 410D, 15 seats

1987 (E) MERCEDES 507, 16 seats

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New 512, 612, 614 and 814 Vario's, 24 seats, high spec.

71969/MB

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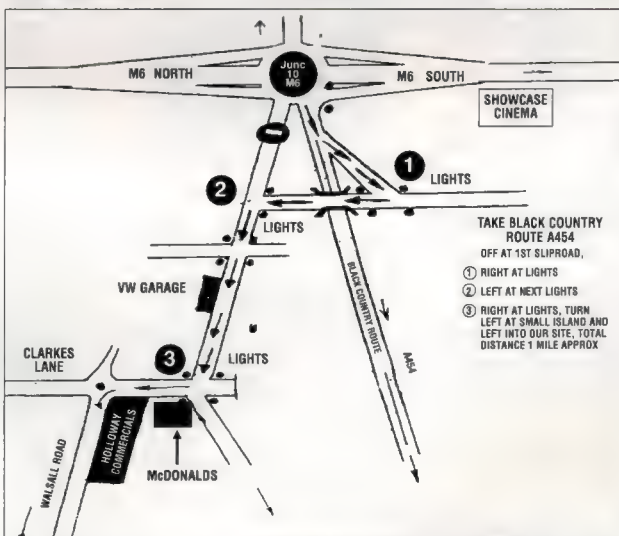
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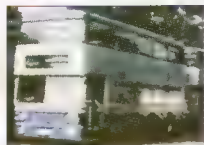
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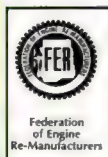
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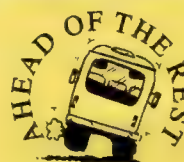
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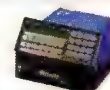
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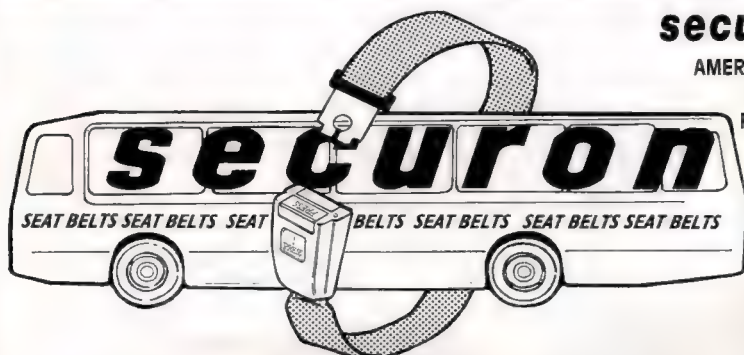
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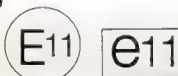


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NOTICE

UNDERTAKINGS BY STAGECOACH HOLDINGS PLC

In accordance with the Undertakings given to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Under 75G of the Fair Trading Act 1973 (as amended by Section 9 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994), Stagecoach Holdings plc (the Company) hereby discloses that it has provided a statement of the Company's annual turnover, total costs and return on capital in respect of its operations in the County of Cambridgeshire, the Districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough in the County of Northamptonshire and the Districts of Bedford and Mid Bedfordshire in the County of Bedfordshire.

A copy of same is available to any person on request to the company

Stagecoach Holdings plc
Rothersthorpe Avenue,
NORTHAMPTON NN4 8UT

Contact: Mr B A Warner,
Managing Director - Stagecoach United Counties
Stagecoach Campus

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73962/APP

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL Department of Planning and Transportation Tender Results

In accordance with Section 90 of the Transport Act
1985 and associated regulations, the results of
Tenders for Local Bus Service contracts tendered in
batches 9704/T4893, 9705/T4895 and 9706/T4909
are now published.

Copies of the document may be viewed at County
Hall, Norwich (Department of Planning and
Transportation reception, Third Floor) or at any
Public Library in Norfolk during the month of
December 1997.

72189/7EN

DUNN-LINE OF NOTTINGHAM Annual Salary £15,000 per year

Dunn-Line at present operates in excess of seventy vehicles, operating both coach
and bus operations. Vehicles are operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Due to progression and the need for development, the requirement has arisen for
a Traffic Manager.

The Traffic Manager would need to be a strong, confident person, he/she would
need to hold a current PCV, and have relevant driving experience.

The Traffic Manager would report directly to the Operations Director on a daily
basis. The Traffic Manager would be responsible for the:

- 1) allocation of work
- 2) control of the driving staff
- 3) help deal with problems.

The successful candidate would be required to be flexible.

Interested candidates should apply in writing to:

Mr Simon Dunn, Operations Director, Dunn-Line Travel, Dunn-Line Corporation
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Previous applicants need not re-apply.

Application forms are available from: Director of Social Services, Central Unit, Sandwell M.B.C., Lombard Street West, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 8EB or ring 0121 569 5486 (24 hour answering service) quoting Ref. No. 607.

Closing date: 22nd December, 1997.

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73976/APP

73976/APP

VACANCY - DEPOT ENGINEER - (Stockton on Tees)

Stagecoach Transit is Teesside's major bus operator, with a fleet of some 110 buses.

The Company is seeking to recruit an experienced engineer to manage its engineering facilities at Stockton. The successful applicant will report directly to the Engineering Director and be responsible for the maintenance and presentation of the Company's vehicles.

Applicants should have a proven record in fleet management and budgetary control and be able to effectively motivate and manage a depot workforce of both skilled and unskilled employees.

The successful applicant is likely to be a time served engineer with relevant qualifications, ideally with membership of a professional body.

A competitive salary, together with an attractive relocation package will be available to the candidate capable of meeting this challenging position.

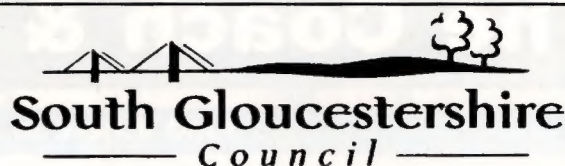
Applications, including current salary, should be submitted in writing by Friday 21st December 1997 to:

**Mr Wilson Clark,
Engineering Director,
Stagecoach Transit
Church Road,
Stockton on Tees TS18 2HW**

Stagecoach

TRANSIT

74211/APP



TRANSPORT ACT 1985

TENDER No. LBS01/97

Tenders are invited for the provision of local bus services, in accordance with Section 89 of the Transport Act 1985. It is intended that the services will commence operation from 30th March 1998.

Operators who have already confirmed their interest will receive details automatically.

Other operators can obtain details from:

Director of Planning, Transportation and Environmental Services, Public Transport and Rapid Transit Section, PO Box 1775, Yate, South Gloucestershire BS37 7FY.

Tel. (01454) 864595.

Closing date for return of tenders is 12.00 midday on Friday 19th December 1997.

73968/TEN

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Mercedes-Benz

72200/APP

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V — V

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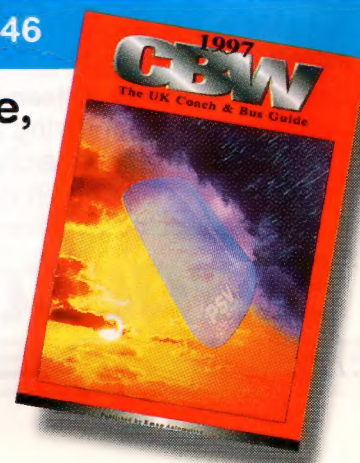
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PEOPLE

Omnibus Society's new head

PLYMOUTH CITYBUS managing director, Brian Fisher, is to be the next president of the Omnibus Society. Mr Fisher has steered municipally-owned Citybus to the point where it has a reputation for earning respectable profits without compromising on innovation and top-quality service.

The Omnibus Society chairman, Barry Le Jeune, said: "We aim to have as president someone who is well known in the industry and, through the developments at Citybus, Mr Fisher fits the bill."

As president, Mr Fisher will host a presidential weekend (11-12 July) based at the University of Plymouth, attracting well over 100 members to the city. The programme will include visits to a number of local bus operators.



Fisher: steering Citybus

Lifetime in the business ending

AFTER a lifetime at the hub of the coach business in the UK, Harry Beardsmore of Salvador Caetano UK of Heather has retired.

Mr Beardsmore, 65, was involved from day one with the import of Caetano coach bodies from Portugal in 1968. At that time he was with the Moseley Group which pioneered the sale of Continental coaches in the UK, including Unicar, UTIC and Bova.

Being in on the ground floor has given him a unique insight into the technical issues associated with bringing vehicles from foreign

manufacturers into the UK and has inevitably resulted in a special relationship with the Caetano factory in particular. During his regular visits to Portugal he has developed an appreciation of Port wine.

Shortly after Caetano established its own independent dealership in Northampton in 1984, Mr Beardsmore rose to the position of joint managing director with Oscar Walker and became md in his own right before leaving the company for a short period.

When he returned Mike Stannard had been installed



Harry Beardsmore: unique insight into importing

in the md's chair and Mr Beardsmore took up the position of technical director, a position which he has held up until his retirement.

One of his most recent involvements has been with Duple Metsec and the Caetano-built double deckers

for Hong Kong.

However, over the last 18 months there has been a gradual preparation for his leaving the company and service manager, Mike Bishop, has taken over responsibility for technical matters.

Eastbourne Buses' executive director retires

PETER BARNARD retires at the end of this month after 31 years with Eastbourne Buses and its predecessors.

Mr Barnard oversees the operations division but he started, as did all staff who joined the then Eastbourne Cor-

poration Transport Department, as a conductor, quickly learned to drive and then spent 14 years 'on the road'. He became inspector in 1976, deputy chief inspector in 1981 and chief inspector in 1983.

It was the creation of the post of operations manager that moved him further up the ladder as he was successful in gaining it in 1984, and in 1986 he was made an executive director of the newly-formed Eastbourne Buses.

SUBSCRIPTIONS



Coach and Bus Week is the news weekly for coach and bus operators. **Transit** provides vital analysis of, and information on, the UK public transport scene every fortnight. Together they make an unbeatable and invaluable package. All annual subscription rates include delivery by first class post. It is important to fill out all parts of this form. NB: Transit is not available on subscription without **Coach and Bus Week**.

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Senior/General ☐ 02

Engineering/ Service

Manager ☐ 03

Other (please specify) ☐ 04

Driver ☐ 05

2. What is your company's main business function?

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
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For luxury, style and comfort, there's only one way to travel and, over the years, Flights have kept coming back to the Toyota Optimo midi-coach. Its new 4.1 litre turbo-charged engines mean reliable take-offs whatever the weather and increased fuel economy makes long-haul journeys less tiring. What's more, passengers can now fasten seat belts on all of the new wider seats and their baggage handling has also been improved. For more information on the Toyota Optimo IV, check-in with Steve Prime on 01737 768 585. It's the first call for Flights.

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For more information please contact Steve Prime, Coach Sales Manager, Toyota (GB) Ltd., The Quadrangle, Redhill, Surrey RH1 1PX. Tel. 01737 768 585. Erringtons of Evington, Leicester. Tel. 0116 273 0421. Regal Coach Sales, Glasgow. Tel. 0141 776 3268. AD Coach Sales, Devon. Tel. 01884 860767. Salvador Caetano (UK) Ltd., Heather. Tel. 01530 263 333.